



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

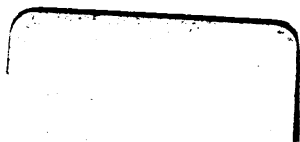
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

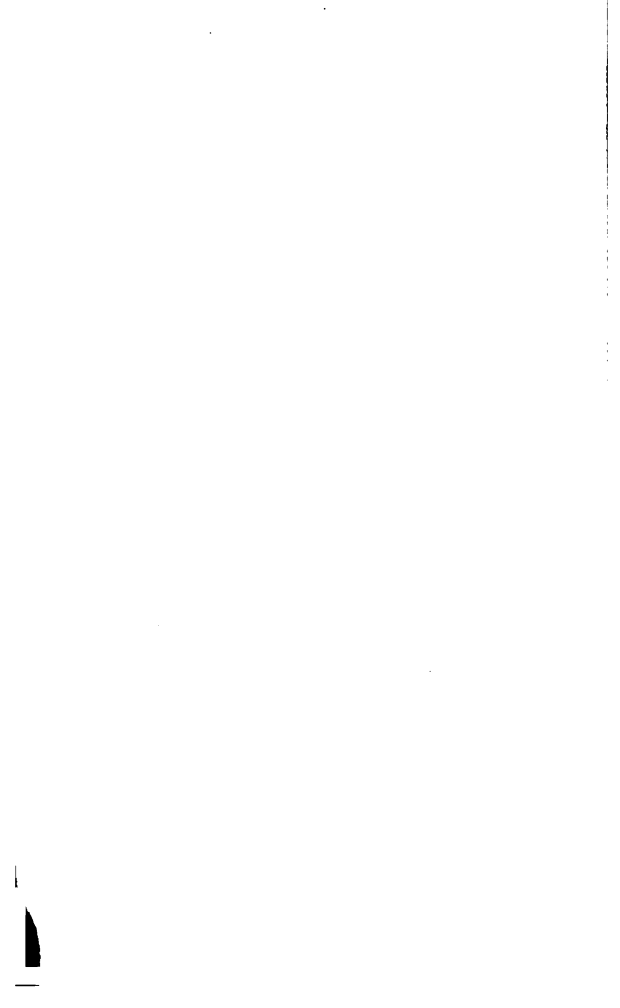
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

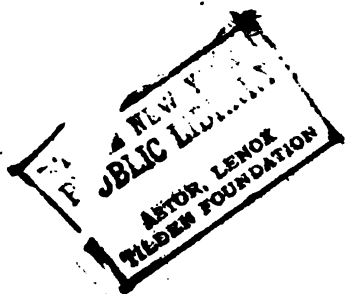
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

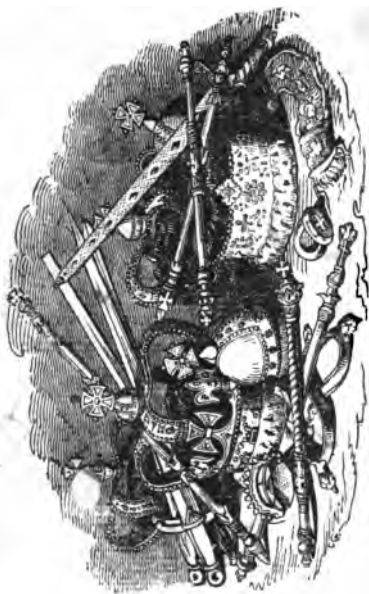


CB
British





British
CR



REGALIA
Used at the English coronations.

THE *Not in L.D.*
BRITISH STORY *10/2-2m*
15/3
BRIEFLY TOLD,

FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE PRESENT PERIOD,

ILLUSTRATED WITH
THIRTY-SIX ENGRAVINGS
Representing the sovereigns in their proper costumes.

Third Edition



Druidical Stonehenge.

PARIS.

BAUDRY'S EUROPEAN LIBRARY,
3, QUAI MALAQUAIS, NEAR THE PONT DES ARTS,
AND 9, RUE DU COQ, NEAR THE LOUVRE.

1840.

**THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

271632A

**ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**

R 1926 L

ADVERTISEMENT.

It being the Author's chief purpose, in this brief outline of **BRITISH STORY**, to give rather a history of the changes which the Nation has undergone, than a biography of its Sovereigns, the early part occupies the larger share of attention : the events of that period, in which are found the latent causes of all that has since occurred, being of superior interest to the juvenile reader. In the subsequent parts, as memorable changes did not take place under every sovereign, a few words are, in some instances, sufficient for a whole reign ; yet, whenever a remarkable revolution was effected in the national institutions, the narrative is proportionally dilated. In still later times, or rather, in the modern period, a crowd of events present

themselves, from which only a selection could be made, to keep the work within the prescribed limits : the Author has taken the most important, and endeavoured so to explain them, as to bring his narrative to a level with the capacities of his young readers. In pursuing his task, he has met with the difficulties incident to such undertakings; but presumes he has so far surmounted them as to render his little volume an acceptable preparative to the study of more elaborate histories of the British Nation.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Early State of Britain.—Mines of Britain.—British Towns.—Clothing of the Natives.—Manners and Customs.—The Druids.—Religion.—Human Sacrifices.—Products of the Soil.—Cæsar's Invasion.—Cassibelaunus deserted by his Countrymen.—Advantages to the Britons from their subjugation by the Romans.—Christianity introduced among the Britons.—Druidical Learning.—BOADICEA.—Caledonians, Scots, and Picts.—Agricola's defeat of them.—Adrian's Wall.—Severus's Wall.—Eboracum, or York, an ancient place of importance.—Departure of the Romans.—Distress of the Britons.—Invasions by various Enemies.—Invitation to, and settlement of, the Saxons.—HENGIST and Horsa.—Quarrel between the Britons and Saxons.—Prince ARTHUR.—The Britons expelled.—The Saxon Heptarchy Established. Page 1

CHAPTER II.

Progress of Religion, Arts, and Knowledge.—State of the Britons when deserted by the Romans.—British Churches.—Saxon Barbarism.—Character of the Saxons.—Idolatrous Remains.—Names of the Days of the Week.—Saxon Language.—

Persons of the Saxons.—Saxon Manners.—Dwellings.—Clothing.—Banqueting.—Hospitality.—Mode of entertaining Strangers.—Daily Habits and Diet.—Amusements.—Funereal Rites.—Sepulchres.—Conversion of the Saxons to Christianity.—**ETHELBERT**, King of Kent.—Pope Gregory.—Augustine the Missionary.—Austerities.—Superstitions. . . . Page 20

CHAPTER III.

Saxon Heptarchy.—**EGBERT**, sole King of England.—Fate of the ancient Britons.—Invasions by the Danes and Normans.—Danish Invasion.—Egbert's Death.—Weakness of his Successors.—Ravages of the Danes.—**ALFRED**.—His Adventure at the Herdsman's Cottage.—His Visit to the Danish Camp.—Battle of Eddington and Defeat of the Danes.—State of England at that period.—Alfred's Policy and Improvement of his Subjects.—Encouragement given to Learning.—Oxford University established.—Battle fought by Alfred.—His Death. . . . Page 35

CHAPTER IV.

North Britain.—Martial Spirit of the Caledonian Nations.—Early Kings of the Scots.—Introduction of Christianity into Scotland.—The Picts vanquished by the Scots.—Eminent Men in Britain prior to Alfred's Time.—Pelagius.—Gildas the Wise.—Nennius.—Venerable Bede.—Alfred's Successors.—Dunstan the Monk.—Ascendancy of the Danes in England.—Reign of Canute the Great and his Sons.—Restoration of the Saxon Line.—**EDWARD THE CONFESSOR**.—Monks.—Hermits.—Regular Clergy.—Secular Clergy.—Appointment of Parishes.—Edward's partiality towards the Normans.—Earl Godwin and his son Harold.—Usurpation of the Throne by the latter.—Claims of William,

Duke of Normandy.—The Norman Invasion.—Battle of Hastings.—Death of Harold, and submission of the English. Page 52

CHAPTER V.

Saxon Customs.—Ranks among the Anglo-Saxons.—England at the time of the Norman Invasion.—Cities.—Slavery.—Great Lords and Abbots.—Commutation for Crimes.—Prices of Wounds and Death inflicted on different ranks.—Trials.—Ordeals.—Value of Farming Stock and Land.—Manners of the Anglo-Saxons.—Feudal System.—Tyrannical Acts of WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.—Attempt to suppress the English Language.—Domesday Book.—The Curfew.—New Forest, in Hampshire.—Forest Laws.—Death and Character of the Conqueror.—WILLIAM RUFUS. Page 80

CHAPTER VI.

The Crusades.—Siege and Capture of Jerusalem.—HENRY I.—Robert, Duke of Normandy.—Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury.—Shipwreck of Prince William.—Learning of Henry I.—STEPHEN.—HENRY II.—Thomas à Becket.—King of Scotland taken prisoner by the English.—RICHARD I.—His splendid achievements in the Holy Land.—Imprisoned by the Duke of Austria, and ransomed by his subjects.—JOHN.—Magna Charta.—HENRY III.—Civil Wars.—Commencement of the House of Commons. Page 100

CHAPTER VII.

General Observations.—Scottish Affairs prior to the reign of Edward I.—State of Literature.—Learned Men.—Roger Asse-

rius.—Marianus Scotus.—Ingulphus.—William of Malmesbury.
 —Geoffrey of Monmouth.—Roger Hoveden.—Roger Bacon.—
 Ignorance of the Monks.—Architecture of the Norman Period.
 —State of the English People.—Surnames first used.—English
 Language at different periods.—EDWARD I.—Conquest of Wales.
 —Wars in Scotland.—Wallace.—EDWARD II.—Battle of Ban-
 nockburn.—EDWARD III.—His claims on the Crown of France.—
 Battle of Crecy.—Edward the Black prince.—Siege and Capture
 of Calais.—Battle of Queen Philippa.—Defeat of the Scots, and
 Capture of their King.—Battle of Poitiers.—The French King
 brought prisoner to London.—John Wickliffe, the Reformer.—
 —RICHARD II.—Wat Tyler's Insurrection.—Pretensions of
 Henry, Duke of Lancaster.—Deposition and Murder of Richard.
 —HENRY IV.—Increase of English Commerce.—Low state of Li-
 terature.—Persecution of the Lollards.—HENRY V.—Battle of
 Azincourt.—HENRY VI.—Joan of Arc.—Loss of conquests in
 France.—Claims of the Duke of York upon the Crown.—
 Wars of the Roses.—Earl of Warwick.—Henry deposed and
 murdered.—EDWARD IV.—EDWARD V.—RICHARD III.—Battle
 of Bosworth.—HENRY VII.—Lambert Simnel and Perkin War-
 beck. Page 132

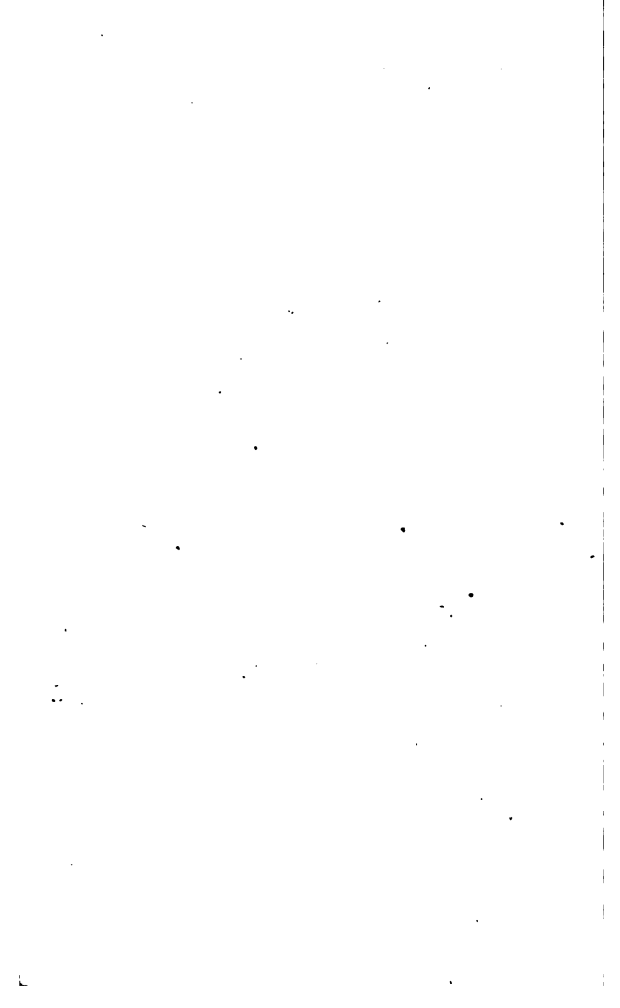
CHAPTER VIII.

Gradual improvement of the English People.—Power of the
 Barons broken by Henry VII.—Columbus, and his Discovery of
 America.—Pointed style of Architecture.—Invention of the Art
 of Printing.—HENRY VIII.—Cardinal Wolsey.—Luther.—The
 Reformation.—Rise of Protestantism.—Cranmer.—Suppression
 of Religious Houses.—Quarrel with the Pope.—The Bible trans-
 lated into English.—EDWARD VI.—Progress of the Reforma-
 tion.—MARY.—Lady Jane Grey.—Popery re-established.—Dread-
 ful persecutions of the Protestants.—Cranmer's death.—ELIZA-

ATH.—Protestantism restored and confirmed.—Mary, Queen of Scots.—Spanish Armada.—Elizabeth's character.—East India Company established.—Virginia colonized.—**JAMES I.**—Gunpowder Plot.—Origin of the Puritans.—**CHARLES I.**—Dissensions with the Parliament.—Civil War.—Battle of Naseby.—Execution of the King.—The Commonwealth.—Oliver Cromwell.—Battle of Worcester. Page 178

CHAPTER IX.

The Restoration.—General Monk.—**CHARLES II.**—The *Cabal* Ministry.—The King pensioned by France.—Rye-house Plot.—Lord William Russell.—Algernon Sidney.—Plague in London.—Fire of London.—**JAMES II.**—Duke of Monmouth.—Judge Jefferys.—Attempt of the King to restore Popery.—*Revolution.*—James abdicates.—**WILLIAM and MARY.**—Battle of the Boyne.—**ANNE.**—Duke of Marlborough.—Gibraltar taken from the Spaniards.—**GEORGE I.**—Whigs and Tories.—The Pretender.—**GEORGE II.**—Battle of Dettingen.—Rebellion in favour of the Pretender.—Battle of Culloden.—**GEORGE III.**—American War.—French Revolution.—Riots in London.—Malady of the King.—Regency.—**GEORGE IV.**—Concession of Catholic Claims.—**WILLIAM IV.**—Parliamentary Reform.—**VICTORIA.**—Disturbances in Canada.—Opening of the railroad from London to Birmingham. Page 215



THE BRITISH STORY

BRIEFLY TOLD.



British warrior.

CHAPTER I.

I suppose that our island was remarkably inviting to those early adventurers, who, after the dispersion at Babel, rambled over the earth in search of settlements; for, at a very

remote period, it was occupied by various rival nations, and visited by merchants from the East. The mines of Britain supplied the artisans of foreign climes with tin, lead, copper, and iron, as soon as man had well learned their use. With whom those ancient traders dealt, or whether they found an uninhabited island, and therefore worked the mines themselves, we cannot tell, at this distance of time. The story of Britain, indeed, is little better than a fable, until about fifty years before the Christian æra, when men of inquisitive minds, able to record their observations, invaded the island; and they have transmitted to succeeding ages their extended knowledge. Perhaps, I need scarcely say that I am alluding to the conquering Romans. Our history, therefore, as such, can scarcely be said to begin, till Julius Cæsar, with his legions, crossed the sea, and made a landing here. We have from him and other Roman authors some credible and connected accounts; although we may reasonably suspect the proud warriors to have represented matters with some favour

to their own prowess and reputation in military matters.

In order that we may form some idea of the change which time has brought about in Britain, we must pay a little attention to the descriptions thus afforded us of the state of things in this island nineteen hundred years ago. We should sometimes forget awhile the objects around us, and look back to the distant age, when fierce barbarians occupied the land, and sought security and shelter in its woods and wilds.

The Roman historians, however, tell us of *British towns*, some of which were important stations of residence, and had a degree of military strength. The place now called St. Albans, in Hertfordshire, is particularly mentioned as the capital city of Cassibelaunus and his people. It was then an open space, surrounded by a wood, and farther guarded by a rampart and fosse, or an embankment and moat, which the Britons had formed on all sides. Within this were the wicker-work thatched huts of the natives, whose domestic fires had no other

chimney than a hole in the roof; neither had they any window that we read of.

The clothing and manners of the people corresponded with the rudeness or simplicity of their dwellings. That strange endeavour to render the person terrific, which is observable in modern savages, influenced the ancient Britons to paint or stain their flesh with various colours, particularly blue, which was obtained from a plant called *woad*. Their garments consisted of undressed skins; their weapons were long spears, bows and arrows, and knives. Their priests and real rulers, the Druids, procured vestures from the continent, and distinguished themselves in many ways from the warriors and common people. They conducted their worship amid the thick gloom of ancient forests, whose pillared shades too often glared with the ruddy light of human sacrifices, consumed in huge figures of basket-work, formed to represent their gods !

I do not say that human sacrifices were offered every day or even frequently : but they took place often enough to make the

picture of *those* times, as History presents it to our notice, dreadful indeed. However, we need not continue our examination of that part of it. The Druids, who lived nineteen hundred years ago, and ruled with haughty cruelty over the minds of men, had nearly arrived at the end of their power and name. I will tell you how their destruction, and the first great event recorded in the story of Britain, came about.

We have observed that Britain was noted, as far back as history goes, for being a land rich in productions of the soil and of the mine. It was, in fact, a fair portion of the world, as known to the ancients; and just such a country as ambitious adventurers, like the Romans, would wish to gain for themselves. It was inhabited by many separate and hostile tribes, or nations, whose chiefs sought the destruction of each other as much as that of any enemy who could come over the seas. Julius Cæsar might possibly have been aware of these facts; or, perhaps, he merely took the chance of a new discovery. Certain, however, it is,

that the inhabitants of that part of the island, which is now called Kent, were surprised by a number of Roman galleys, containing several legions of veteran soldiers, with the greatest commander in the known world at their head. What could the Britons do? They had swords, and spears, and military engines, such as chariots armed with scythes; and they had abundance of strength and courage, and some skill in the management of these; but the Romans, as experienced and disciplined troops, had a vast advantage over them, and soon secured a footing in their territory. Cæsar, however, did not immediately gain entire possession; but, having reduced certain tribes, he left them for a time; and, afterwards returning with greater force, vanquished the various armies of the natives in successive battles, until tribute and something like obedience were exacted. Poor Cassibelaunus was hunted from place to place; and, at length, had his woody metropolis of Verulam, or St. Albans, stormed and burnt. Now all this was sufficiently disastrous and mortifying, no doubt, and

added something to the Roman fame. Yet I rather think that the Britons were ultimately the greatest gainers by the event. I know not how long they might have blued their bodies, worn raw hides, lived within wattled hovels, and subsisted on wild fruits and milk, if Cæsar had not indulged his inclination to give them a specimen of Roman prowess and conduct, arms and arts. I know not how long the Druids might have burned men in wicker baskets, or slaughtered them on their sloping altars, called *eromlechs*, if the Romans, exasperated at their obstinacy and their influence in inciting the Britons to resistance, had not chased them, by fire and sword, to the western extremities of the country, and thence into Mona, or Anglesea, where, at length, they perished, together with their fierce religion. Nay, farther, I know not how many ages might have rolled away, before Christianity could have been heard of here, if Britain had not become part of the Roman Empire, by which means, at a very early period, missionaries, if not St. Paul himself, obtained access to our

certain province, who gathered together eighty thousand men against the Roman general Suetonius. But, alas for her and them ! they were miserably defeated and slain, and she, unable to bear up against the misfortune, put an end to her days by poison. Still there were nations unsubdued, so that Agricola, a governor appointed by Vespasian, found a good deal of work on his hands. He had to fight, and talk, and manage, long before the southern provinces were disposed to obey him. However, finding, at length, that he was a good governor, as well as a good general, the people became pretty quiet under him, and afforded him leisure to go and see what could be done in the northern parts of the island, then called CALEDONIA, now SCOTLAND.

The inhabitants of Caledonia, like those of South Britain, were composed of a number of warlike tribes, among whom the most celebrated were the Caledonians, the Scots, and the Picts ; and they had the advantage of a rugged mountainous country, which afforded them numberless places of strength, to which

they could retire for shelter, and whence they could annoy their enemies. Agricola encountered an army of these people, under Galgacus, their leader, who made a desperate resistance, but were, in the end, entirely defeated. In order, afterwards, to make them keep within their own bounds, Agricola built a chain of forts across the country, between the Frith of Forth and the Clyde; but Adrian, who subsequently paid a visit to that quarter, not liking that such bad neighbours should have even the possibility of invading the South, built, or threw up, a wall, or rampart, of earth, above sixty miles long. But, I suppose, the wall was not so high but that those who liked the sunny side of it could get over. Other walls, in aftertimes, were therefore built, to block out those restless trespassers; but none so complete as was that of the Emperor Severus, who, though old and infirm, visited Britain on purpose to repress the swarming destructive hordes of Caledonia. After defeating them with some difficulty, he drove them back beyond the old boundaries, and erected a solid wall of

stone, sixty-eight miles long, twelve feet high, and eight feet thick, along which was a ditch and a military road. This undertaking occupied his army two whole years.

This Emperor, Severus, made his chief place of residence, whilst in Britain, at a city then called *Eboracum*, now *York*. So that it must be a place of considerable antiquity, and has been one of much note in our history. He died in the year 211. For a considerable time after this, the Roman armies in South Britain were chiefly occupied in repressing the inroads of the northern tribes, who, in spite of all walls and ditches, made their way over, whenever an opportunity occurred.

In the mean time, the Britons had ceased to consider the Romans as their masters, and looked up to them as protectors; for they had lost much of their original warlike character, whilst they were gaining an acquaintance with the softer arts of peace. As long as the Roman empire could spare its legions to occupy South Britain, it was pretty safe from any formidable attack and invasion;

but, in time, Rome herself was so surrounded by barbarian enemies, and her territory became so endangered, that all her forces were needed near home for her own preservation. About this time, too, Britain was invaded by fresh enemies from the continent—the Franks and Germans, who, watching their time, appeared on the eastern shores, whilst the Caledonians poured in their plundering thousands from the north. The poor Britons, forgetting their ancient military renown, and the lessons of the Roman warriors, made the most piteous complaints, and thought only of imploring help from their old masters. We have one of their moaning epistles still before us. “To Aëtius, thrice consul : *the groans of the Britons!* The barbarians drive us to the sea ;—the sea sends us back to the barbarians :—we have only the hard choice left of perishing by the sword or the waves !” But these whining applications could not much longer be attended to ; the Britons received for answer, that they must not in future look to Rome for help ; and that they had better arm in their own de-

fence. Having, therefore, assisted them in repairing the wall of Severus, the Roman legions took their farewell of this island, about the year 448, after having been in some sort rulers here for nearly five hundred years.

When people are cowardly and indolent,



Anglo-Saxon.

they can seldom shew even the lowest kind of prudence in times of danger. The Britons

had already been invaded by hordes from Germany, and had sufficiently observed their character and purpose. Yet, when a new company, under the name of Saxons, appeared,—some say accidentally,—on the coast, Vortigern, a British chief, struck a bargain with them as allies, and gave them possession of the Isle of Thanet as payment for their assistance against the Picts. Nothing could have pleased those adventurers better; war was their trade, and they could now turn it to unusually good account. Hengist and Horsa, the two Saxon chiefs, promised to give the desired help, and were as good as their word. Seventeen shiploads of their nation soon after arrived, and occupied their new estate; receiving, at the same time, from the Britons every thing necessary for their support. To be sure, they did fight according to agreement; but it was rather for themselves than for the Britons; and this was not according to agreement; but against such an alteration in the bargain the Britons had taken no precaution. They were wonderfully pleased to see their old enemies

running before the battle-axes of the Saxons, and seeking the northern side of the great wall ; but they were not half so delighted when they found that there was little to choose between them and their valiant allies.

And so it was that the good understanding between the Britons and Saxons did not last very long. The latter soon demanded more territory, more provisions, more money, than had been agreed upon ; and they threatened to pay themselves by pillage if their demands were not otherwise satisfied. In the mean time, their numbers increased from abroad ; for there were plenty more, who had no objection to come to a land where good things were to be had for the taking. The Britons, in this dilemma, talked, and treated, and did all that the weak can do against the strong ; but it was of no use. All appearance of friendship gave way at last. The Saxons even called in the Picts, against whom themselves had been originally invited into the island. It is easy to see who must prevail. The Britons were driven from one province

to another ; not always, however, without resistance on their part ; and instances happened in which parties of them, made desperate by their calamities, shewed successful valour. We are told, that some of the Saxons were once repulsed, even to the coast, and compelled to re-embark ; but they soon returned, with increased numbers and aggravated fury : in short, the south-eastern part of the island was entirely cleared of its ancient inhabitants, to make room for the new settlers. Londin, or London, was theirs ; and it only remained to keep on as they had begun, to make the whole country eventually submit to them.

I must not forget to mention that, amongst the British chiefs, who opposed the Saxons most successfully, was the famous Prince Arthur. He fairly defeated the Saxons in several engagements ; and might, perhaps, have finally subdued them, had it not been for a miserable jealousy, which arose amongst the Britons, against him. He was often obliged to defend himself against them by arms : and, at length, was mortally wounded, in an en-

counter with his own nephew. After his death, little opposition was made. The Britons were gradually expelled, or driven to take shelter amongst the mountains of Wales, where their descendants still remain, and form the Welsh nation.

The various German chiefs had now nothing to do but to divide their conquests amongst themselves. We should observe here that some of these invaders were called *Saxons*, and some *Angles*; and it is from the latter that our country has obtained the name of *Angle-land*, or *England*.

There were seven principal leaders amongst those Saxons and Angles, and they formed seven little separate kingdoms, known in history as THE HEPTARCHY.

The most powerful of them were, Hengist, king of Kent; Ella, of the *South Saxons*, or those who dwelt in Surrey and Sussex; Cerdic, of the *West Saxons*, or those on the borders of Wales, and in Cornwall. Then there was the king of the *East Saxons*, whose country still whispers their name in *Essex*; the king of *Northumberland*; and

the king of the central parts, called *Mercia*. But as these petty monarchs were continually fighting with each other, and changing or losing their thrones, we cannot include a particular account of each in this brief story of Britain : we must now attend a little to other things.

CHAPTER II.

PROGRESS OF RELIGION, ARTS, AND KNOWLEDGE.

We have now traced a few particulars of British history, from its beginning to near the end of the sixth century of the Christian æra. The savage appearance and manners of the Britons were greatly changed during their intercourse with the Romans. Christianity was introduced, churches were built, bishops were appointed, and the inhabitants of this island began to bestow the names of *barbarians* and *heathen* upon nations around them.

We must not, however, conclude that the Britons, at this time, possessed the conveniences of brick houses and four-wheeled carriages, substantial stone churches and splendid cathedrals, the comforts of social

parties, the luxuries of dress and of the table, the refinements of fashion, and the thousand courtesies arising from politeness and good breeding : on the contrary, though they had discarded their dresses of raw hides, and had ceased to stain and scarify their skin, to give themselves a formidable aspect ; though some had exchanged their wattled hovels for wooden huts ; and though they no longer offered human sacrifices on the altars of false gods, they were still so far from what is now deemed civilization, that, could we visit a people circumstanced exactly as were the Britons at the time the Romans withdrew from them, we should imagine we had fallen among the most uncultivated race upon the earth.

From the accounts of those times which have reached us, it appears that very few persons lived or appeared better than the wood gipsies of the present day. Many of them, I believe, had no residence at all better than the retreats of certain wild animals of the forests, whose leafy coverts they shared. Others, who had an inheritance in the soil,

were certainly better fed, better lodged, and better taught; they copied the Roman garb and manners; wearing a sort of body dress, with a cloak and sandals, and using something of the Roman language and address; yet these were but rude beginners in such things, and would appear most uncouth barbarians to us, could we obtain an hour's acquaintance with them.

As to religion, I doubt not that there were some true and intelligent Christians amongst those, who, even at that early period, professed the name in Britain. But I am afraid it would be too much to suppose that one in ten of the nation at large had taken up any religion whatever in exchange for that which had been put down. It was a difficult matter to communicate at all with a people ignorant of letters, and scattered wide amongst the forests. Nevertheless, small assemblies were held; the grand principles of theology were taught; and some few began to reason and entertain opinions of their own. Churches they had, indeed—of such at least historians tell us; and they were undoubtedly places

constructed and used for Christian worship ; but I question much if we should apply that name to such buildings, if they were now before our eyes ; for they were mere huts, composed of wattles, or wicker-work, and thatched with reeds.

However, I do not wish at all to *disparage* the men and doings of those days, who, for aught I know, did as much in proportion to their means and knowledge as we do with ours, and were, therefore, as praiseworthy as we are, all things considered : I only *desire* to look at things *as they were*, in order that we may observe the real progress of time, by the advance in civilization which it has accomplished from age to age.

Unhappily, improvements of this sort have many hindrances ; and the people engaged in them are often forced back again by injurious circumstances, until old forms of ignorance and rudeness are seen to return. So it was, when the Saxons first possessed themselves of lands in Britain.

'They were pagans, and excelled in nothing but war. They brought with them manners

and customs worse than those of the ancient Britons, when the Romans first arrived; and, in proportion as they were victorious and powerful, and supplanted the Britons, they drove the manners of the nation back towards their former rude and barbarous condition. The Saxons were renowned for their valour and love of liberty; but, not content with exercising their arms in defence of their own freedom, they had no respect for the rights and liberties of others; and therefore were little better than selfish ruffians, amongst nations weaker than themselves. Their leaders, even in their own land, were maintained by a race of slaves, who cultivated their estates, and rendered the produce to their lords. This was the plan in most of the German nations; and the consequence was that tillage, having every discouragement, was in as rude and wretched a state as other things.

But I have said that these people were pagans, and, unhappily, the Britons found, to their cost, that the religion of their invaders was as much to be dreaded as their natural

barbarity and fierceness. Their Christian churches were demolished; their Christian priests were slaughtered; and the worship of the German idols was brought in, which differed very little from that of the Druids, whom the Romans had extirpated. Do you know, that *we* continue to notice some of those Saxon gods, even now? Ay, and the days set apart for their honour you pay some attention to, yourself. Sunday, the first day of the week, was so named from the worship of the *sun*; Monday, from that of the *moon*; Tuesday was so called from *Tuisco*; Wednesday was *Woden's* day; Thursday was *Thor's* day; Friday, *Friga's* day; and Saturday was *Seater's* day. These are not the only keepsakes which the Saxons have left behind them. They have bequeathed us

THEIR LANGUAGE. *It is the Saxon tongue, refined and enriched by time, with additions from other languages, which we now make use of.* Let us examine that last sentence, which, I suppose, we may call *plain English*; —but the first five words are all Saxon; the next word, “*refined*,” is French: “*and*”

space around it. Unacquainted with the use of tiles and mortar, they employed rude materials, and had no notion of beauty or ornament. They were fond of underground habitations, which protected them and their provisions from the rigours of the upper air. Hence, too, in times of invasion, many of their retreats remained undiscovered; and the country had the appearance of an uninhabited waste.

The clothing used by these nations, generally, consisted of a loose mantle, fastened with a clasp or pinned with *a thorn*. The rich wore, besides, a close garment, fitting tight to the body, and the skins of wild beasts, carefully prepared and put together. The children of German families were very badly clothed; and little attention was paid to their cleanliness. I suppose the poor Irish at present live nearly as comfortably as our Saxon ancestors did at the time we are speaking of. The master, and the servants or slaves, and the cattle, sometimes occupied the same apartment. Nevertheless, they were fond of banquetting and revelry, and

they were certainly hospitable to strangers beyond any other people. To refuse admittance to any human being was reckoned an impious crime. Every one regaled a visiter to the very best of his ability ; and when, at length, provisions failed, the host would take his guest to some other house, where both would remain, with a hearty welcome, until obliged again to look elsewhere for supplies.

These people were not very early risers ; they commonly waited till broad day-light before they bestirred themselves ; they then bathed in warm water ; and afterwards sat down to breakfast, at a number of small and separate tables. Milk, barley-wine, the juice of the grape also, flesh, and coarse bread, were their usual viands. Sometimes they had wild apples, venison, and cheese. They were seldom guilty of excess in eating ; but in drinking they were by no means temperate.

As for their amusements, they were those of a rude martial people. Dancing amid naked swords and javelins was a common

exercise of the young men, for the entertainment of spectators. They were passionately addicted to gambling. Dice would detain them, until their all, including their own freedom, was staked, and they became slaves to the winner.

The bodies of their most renowned chiefs were burned after death, with their arms and sometimes their favourite horses. A huge mound of earth was then raised over the place where the ashes were deposited. This custom was very prevalent in ancient times.

Such are the leading particulars of those rude German nations, from which the English have unquestionably sprung. It is probable, that those who took possession of this country would have much longer retained their barbarous practices had it not been for the introduction of the Christian religion; which, though brought hither from Rome, where it had been greatly corrupted, was still a heavenly blessing to those who had been used to the senseless and horrid rites of paganism. The manner in which the

religion of Christ was first made known to our Saxon ancestors is differently related by historians ; but, I believe, the following account is, in all its principal points, the true one.

By a favourable circumstance, it happened that Ethelbert of Kent, one of the most powerful of the English-Saxon—or, as they are called, *Anglo-Saxon* kings, had married a Frank, or French princess, who was of the Christian religion. This lady, for whose liberty in the profession of her faith an express bargain had been made by her father, brought over a French bishop to Canterbury; and she also took care to recommend her religion by personal piety, and the most benevolent and irreproachable conduct. Still we do not hear that any of the pagans around her followed her example, or had any thoughts of changing their religion until other events occurred.

About this time, that is, towards the close of the sixth century, it is said that Gregory, afterwards pope of Rome, had observed in the market-place of that city certain Saxon

youths exposed for sale, whom the Roman merchants had purchased of their covetous and unfeeling parents. The ecclesiastic was surprised and pleased with their healthful and expressive countenances, and inquired whence they came : being told, he immediately revolved in his mind the means of sending thither the messengers of the gospel ; and when he became Pope, or Bishop of Rome, he sent Augustine, a Romish monk, with others, to undertake the mission to this island. After many fears on their part, and renewed earnest exhortations from Pope Gregory, Augustine arrived nearly alone in Kent, in the year 597, and found a more favourable reception than he had expected. He caused his interpreters to explain the nature of his errand to the Saxon monarch, who admitted him to a conference in the open air. “ Your words,” replied he to the missionary of the cross, “ are not without apparent reason and importance ; but at present your doctrine is to me too new and uncertain to be immediately received. But, since you have travelled so far to communi-

cate what you deem good news to me, I shall use you with courtesy and kindness. I shall allow you a residence and provisions, with liberty to publish your religion and convert as many as you can."

A better result than this the missionary scarcely desired. He lost no time in availing himself of the leave and assistance afforded; and, with his few attendants, he entered in procession the city of the Kentish men, called Canterbury, carrying the cross and singing litanies as they went. They soon gained converts. A church, formerly built by the Britons, but abandoned since the Saxon conquest, served them for the celebration of divine service, which was conducted so as to have considerable effect on the spectators. Besides this, Augustine and his followers recommended their religion much by the voluntary hardships and privations they underwent. These peculiarities, called *austerities*, were certainly calculated to make an impression on a people whose conduct had never been reproved by the priests or precepts of paganism. But, more than all, the Romish writers

expressly affirm that miracles were wrought in the face of day by these messengers from the pope. However, we are not required to credit this part of their tale, which, I am inclined to think, has, properly, nothing to do with the "British Story."

CHAPTER III.

Now as to the Heptarchy, which we have already noticed as consisting of seven distinct kingdoms, governed by as many Saxon chiefs, or sovereigns, I think our paper and print will not hold out, if we pursue the history of each during the three hundred and seventy-three years of their existence. I think, too, that our curiosity will be sufficiently satisfied for the present, by just knowing that they lived, and reigned, and fought, or made peace; as may be supposed from their character and circumstances : until some of the weaker powers gave way to the stronger ; so that, at last, the Heptarchy was broken up, and a single monarchy arose in its stead. This took place under Egbert, who inherited one of the larger divisions of the Heptarchy, and became king

of Wessex, in the last year of the eighth century. He was for some years contented with his own dominions, and might have continued so if his neighbours could have let him alone; but the Mercians, who occupied the best part of the country, became desirous of the whole, and Berúlf, their sovereign, turned his arms against Wessex, in the absence of its king.

Egbert soon returned, not only to defend his territory, but to repel the invaders, whom he pursued into Wiltshire, where he fought a great battle, and gained a complete victory. Following up his success, he spread his conquests from province to province, till he had reduced the whole Heptarchy under his sway. He then appointed chiefs to manage the conquered states, reserving to himself the title of King over them all. This took place about three hundred and eighty years after the Saxons had first landed in the island as assistants to the Britons.

By the way, we ought now to make a few inquiries respecting those ancient islanders, the dispossessed inhabitants of our country.

They had been chiefly driven to the western provinces by their unprincipled guests ; but they still existed there in considerable numbers, occupying Cornwall and Wales, as the safest retreat they could obtain. A few of them, however, crossed the southern channel, and formed a settlement on a part of the French coast, from them called Britany ; whilst a few wandered into the territory of their ancient northern enemies, and were permitted, as fugitives, to settle in Scotland, near Dumbarton. But the British *nation* may be said to have emigrated into Wales, amongst the impregnable mountains of which country they cherished their liberty, their ancient historic poetry, with their minstrel yards and their independent profession of the Christian faith. The Church of Rome, having gained power and influence amongst the English Saxons, wished to rule also over the western British churches. The people refused to submit, but were soon afterwards grievously persecuted ; and many were massacred by a Saxon chief, who, though himself a pagan, was probably instructed thus to

act by those whose authority in religion had been so sternly rejected.

To return to Egbert and England, as we may now call the country which he governed. The people of the several states which he had conquered were for many reasons willing to let him have undisturbed dominion. Their own kings had troubled them with continual wars and burdens, and were not descended as was Egbert, in a direct line, from their ancient chieftains. They had not, therefore as the people thought, so good a title to the government, and, what was of greater consequence, they possessed not equal abilities for it. They thought, too, that they should be in less danger from foreign enemies, when united under one head, than if divided into several petty sovereignties; and, therefore they acknowledged Egbert generally, with goodwill and resolution to support his throne.

Egbert, no doubt, was gratified at this turn in public opinion; and, perhaps, he thought to enjoy many years of tranquillity and ease. But herein he was grievously disappointed. His coasts were attacked by a new and for

midable enemy, with whom the Saxons had to maintain a long and desperate warfare; during which they had time to reflect on the situation of the Britons when their ancestors landed, about four hundred years before. We must now inquire who these new comers were.

It seems as if one tribe or other of the Germans had peopled nearly the whole of the north of Europe; for we find, in tracing the history of every fresh warlike tribe which appeared as invaders, that they had originally occupied the central parts of the continent, whence, moving northward, they issued in unnumbered swarms in search of plunder; and, among other places, they visited our British shores. Of the various troops of these freebooters, I have now to speak particularly of the Danes and Normans;—the former inhabiting islands and a peninsula in the Baltic sea; the latter dwelling in *Norway*, whence their name of Normans, or *Northmen*. It was during the reign of King Egbert that those fierce pirates sailed from their own barren coast in quest of the rich



Danish warrior.

pastures and good cheer of this island. Favoured by an easterly wind, the Danish and Norwegian boats arrived in three days on the southern coast of Britain. This, though not the first time that a band or two of them had visited our shores, was the first invasion by them of considerable importance. They were, however, repulsed, though they were

joined by the Britons of Cornwall, who were glad of an opportunity to avenge themselves on their Saxon oppressors. The Danes soon afterwards returned in greater numbers, in thirty-five vessels, and were encountered by Egbert in Dorsetshire, where, though thousands of them were slain, thousands remained to plunder and lay waste the country, after which they returned in triumph to their ships. Two years afterwards, they landed again, and were totally defeated; but, unfortunately, Egbert himself soon died, and England was then almost as badly situated as when the Romans left the island to the ravages of the Scots and the Picts.

We shall not have time to follow these pirates to battle with the various weak Saxon kings who succeeded Egbert, and whose reigns did little good to their country. It was a sad state, indeed, when men had the constant experience or fear of plunder from foreign enemies, who landed when they pleased, and took away whatever they liked that came to hand. Their vessels, being small, easily entered the creeks and rivers,

where they drew them ashore, and, having secured them by intrenchments and a garrison, they spread themselves over the country, carried off inhabitants, cattle, and goods, and then disappeared.

Emboldened by success, the Danes began to think they might as well make themselves stationary here; for, having taken booty of all sorts continually, they saw no reason why they should not use it where they found it. They settled, therefore, in various parts, as circumstances or inclination led them. They made the greatest havoc amongst the churches and monasteries, which they generally stripped of all their valuables, and murdered the priests and monks; although in battle they were frequently defeated and thousands of them slain.

At length Elfred, or as we now call him, Alfred, a Saxon prince, succeeded to the throne of that part of England which the Danes had not yet subdued. He was the victor in many battles with the Danes; and, if his people had possessed a greater portion of his courage and confidence, and had been

united amongst themselves, those lordly robbers would not have ruled here as they did. But, though Alfred fought eight battles in one year with the Danes, and reduced them to great streights, so as to compel them to conditions of peace, the enemy still meditated treachery and violence; and, with a new company of their countrymen, just landed, they made themselves masters of another town, in the west of England. This last event so discouraged the Saxons, that they threw down their arms and fled to places of concealment—some to Wales, the retreat of the Britons, and others to provinces of France. Many endeavoured, by money and submission, to purchase ease and safety to themselves; so that Alfred, abandoned by his troops, was obliged also to retire awhile from the observation of the enemy. He laid aside his crown and dignity, dismissed his servants, and, putting on a peasant's attire, wandered from house to house, and sought food and shelter of the rustic inhabitants. All our *great* historians relate here an incident which a *small* one may surely copy.

It is merely this, that a cottage dame one day employed the unknown king as her baker, enjoining him strictly to see that the cakes on the hearth were not burned for want of turning. Poor Alfred neglected her injunction, and employed himself in refitting his bow and arrows, whilst the bread was sadly scorched. The consequence was that, when the woman perceived the mischief, she gave the king a violent scolding—some say she actually boxed his ears, remarking that he was ready enough to eat hot cakes, but cared not who had the trouble of procuring and preparing them. How little thought this busy chattering housewife that she was scolding A KING ; and that an account of this domestic wrangle would reach posterity for a thousand years afterwards !

But, though Alfred forgot to turn the cakes, he was not unmindful of more important matters. He kept a secret watch upon the Danes, and only waited for an opportunity to shew himself as their great enemy again. On the other hand, the Danes, thinking themselves secure, began to be remiss and careless

in their camp, giving way to revelry and excess, and making sport of their fallen Saxon foes. Alfred now cautiously gathered a few troops round him, and, having himself, as a spy, witnessed the neglected state of the Danish camp, he returned to his own people, declared himself to them, and, appearing like one raised from the dead for their deliverance, was every where hailed with acclamations of joy and gladness. The Danes, suspicious of something, but not knowing what, merely doubled their guards and sentinels. They could not at all tell how or where they were to be attacked, and stupidly waited to see what was coming, until they beheld the banner of the White Horse displayed. A battle was fought at Eddington, where the Danes, defeated with great slaughter, threw themselves on the mercy of the victor. Alfred, who was humane as well as valiant, granted life to those who thus submitted : nay more, he determined to offer them a favourable residence in his kingdom. He, therefore, proposed to settle the Danish chief Guthrum and his followers in a province

of his dominions which had been nearly deprived of its inhabitants by frequent war and pillage. But he insisted upon one condition, which, now-a-days, would appear odd enough; it was, that Guthrum and his men should profess Christianity and be baptized. The Danes readily consented, and those warriors complied with the requisition which Alfred had imposed.

Here we must just observe two or three things, before we proceed with our story. In the first place, the invasion and ravages by the Danes had done more than the conquests of Egbert to unite the Saxon tribes into one nation. For common danger had silenced their petty quarrels; and, besides this, the Danes had removed or demolished most of the boundary marks and fortresses of those little kingdoms. Then, again, Alfred had recommended himself to all by his services and talents; and he was the only chief who could bring the Danes to terms and make them fear to break them.

We also notice, about this time, the division of England into shires, or counties.

Alfred, having a little tranquillity and leisure from fighting, turned his attention to the laws and manners of the people. It required much wisdom and prudence to manage these matters ; for he had to mind both the refractory Danes, now fixed in the north and eastern parts, and the Saxons, his own people, who were likely enough to become jealous of each other. He, therefore, made the same laws for both ; only permitting the Danes to be governed, under him, by their own chiefs. The state of public affairs was, indeed, wretched, when he undertook his great work of reformation. Historians tell us that, “ although the great armies of the Danes were broken, the country was full of straggling troops of that nation, who, being accustomed to live by plunder, had become incapable of industry ; and who, from the natural ferocity of their manners, indulged themselves in violence for the mere love of it. The English themselves, reduced to indigence and despair by these continued depredations, had, in many places, shaken off all rule ; and those who had been plundered one day be-

came in turn plunderers the next. These were the evils for which it was necessary for Alfred to provide a remedy, before he could call himself a ruler, in the proper sense of the word.

“It was to make his proceedings more practicable and convenient, that Alfred divided his kingdom into counties and hundreds, as at present. He made every householder answerable for the conduct of his family and servants, and even of his guests, if they remained longer than three days. Ten neighbouring householders formed a sort of community, called a *tithing*, who were accountable for each other's conduct. Of these one was headborough, or overseer, whose duty it was to take notice of what was done contrary to law. Every man who did not register himself in some tithing was punishable as an outlaw ; and no one was to change his residence without a warrant from the chief man of the tithing to which he belonged.”

Now, some of these regulations would appear to us exceedingly hard ; especially

those which took away the liberty of removing from place to place at pleasure. But we must recollect that those injuries to which men are liable when lawless violence has the rule are much harder, and it is not possible all at once to give perfect security and liberty to people who have been long used to confusion and wrong. It were better for me to ask leave every time I go out of my house, if I were aware that my neighbour must do so too, and that he would thereby be prevented from robbing my dwelling in my absence. In order that men might not rob one another, Alfred made them watch one another, and thus repressed the plundering spirit of the age. Other institutions of that prince fully shewed that his object was their own benefit and security, not the increase of his power as their ruler. He did not make himself or his courtiers judges of crime or innocence; but committed that important office to the people themselves, to persons of the same rank or level as the accused. I allude now to trial by jury, which, if not invented by Alfred, was certainly established by him

here ; and it is justly accounted the most beneficial and precious institution of our country.

But Alfred shewed his chief wisdom in endeavouring to furnish the minds of his subjects with knowledge, by which they might judge of right or wrong before they acted, and thus prevent the crimes which are frequently committed through ignorance. He, therefore, himself a scholar and a writer of some eminence, established colleges and schools, and invited men of learning to settle in his dominions. Oxford owes its ancient renown to his munificence and care. In fact, this truly great man did great things, and had the satisfaction to see the state of public affairs entirely changed for the better before his death. He had fought fifty-six battles with the Danes, and had, at length, subdued and fairly subjected those fierce intruders : he had given power to the laws, respectability to the church, and a degree of light and knowledge to the people : he had re-established the places which had been ruined during the Danish wars : he had pro-

vided an army and a navy for the future defence of the country ; and died, in the vigour of his age and usefulness, in the first year of the tenth century, or A. D. 901.

CHAPTER IV.

**NORTH BRITAIN.—EMINENT MEN.—SUCCESSORS OF
ALFRED.—THE CLERGY.—BATTLE OF HASTINGS.**

And now how far have we read of the “British Story?”—Why, we have noticed the Britons, the Romans, the Saxons, and the Danes; and have entered the tenth century of the Christian reckoning. We have seen how the Britons were treated by the Romans and Saxons; how the Saxons were served by the Danes; and how the Danes were retaliated upon by the Saxons. In fact, we have got through King Alfred’s reign. But Britain extends far north into a country of which we have said little or nothing; and we shall not tell its story fairly if we do not say something of such of its ancient and renowned sons as did not happen to make

themselves famous by the sword. But, if we do not take care, we shall make our story altogether too long ; and, perhaps, find that our paper and print will fail before we have got half through. So we must not say *too much* about any of those things which happened or of those persons who lived in Britain a thousand years ago. As for Scotland, in those ages, it is fortunate for us that there is very little to say ; and certainly with regard to eminent men, there or here, I can find few indeed to mention.

My readers know already that two nations, called Scots and Picts, both warlike people, occupied North Britain when the Romans invaded the South ; and that those fierce northern men had a wonderful liking to the good things of our more fruitful land. I believe it must be confessed that the men of the south were long outdone by the men of the north in military affairs ; for the Romans never were able to subdue the Caledonian nations, although they defeated them in several battles : and it is equally clear that the Britons alone had no success at all against

their northern foes. Even the Romans were obliged to build stone walls and towers, to relieve themselves from the trouble of fighting with those undaunted tribes.

I think, notwithstanding the busy pens of many Scottish writers, who reckon up a hundred kings before the birth of Christ, that their real history, as far as we know it, to the time of Alfred, may be comprised in what we have already said, with the addition of the uncouth names of some half a dozen chiefs. At any rate, it will be quite sufficient for our present purpose, if we keep in mind that the Scots, as we shall henceforth call them, preserved their independence whilst the Britons yielded theirs; that Christianity was introduced into their country about the year 201; that the princes of that land, though rude, were powerful; so that the French kings early coveted their alliance, and maintained it through succeeding ages; that, about the middle of the ninth century, the Scots and Picts had a grand battle, in which the former prevailed and gave their name to the country; and that the

Danes, whilst gaining power and property in England, were repulsed in Scotland, and obliged to abandon its shores entirely. The Scots, indeed, prized their liberty so much, that they fought against their own kings, when they saw occasion.—So much for the history of Scotland to the year of our Lord 900 !

As for eminent men in Britain during those ages, our list will be short, owing to two circumstances :—in the first place, kings and military men must stand aside, because our story has noticed them already ; and then, secondly, it happens that the names of scarcely any others have been handed down to us. Where then, you will ask, were the divines, the authors, the poets, the painters, the sculptors, the architects, the astronomers, the naturalists, the physicians, the lawyers, and so on ? I do not say that there were *none* of any of these ; but I believe that all we know of, to the time of Alfred, might have dined at one table, off one leg of mutton. Let us see : there was St. Augustine—him we have mentioned ;—and I find four

other names of some note—Pelagius, Gildas, Nennius, and Bede;—of these, the first was a divine; the second and third were historians; the last was an ecclesiastic and an historian also. I find few besides mentioned, so that I am afraid the other professions and pursuits had few followers of eminence.

Pelagius, or Morgan, for that was his real name—was a monk of Bangor, in Wales, in the fifth century. He was a very thoughtful, learned, and pious man; but, happening to think differently from the church in general upon certain subjects, his opinions were condemned; he travelled to the Holy Land, and there, it is supposed, he died. His doctrines, however, have made much noise in the world, and are still held by many.

Gildas, surnamed the Wise, it is said, was the first English writer. He wrote concerning the Britons, and died in the sixth century.

Nennius was a monk of Bangor, and wrote the Story of Britain. He died in the seventh century.

Venerable Bede is a great name in English

literature. He wrote the British ecclesiastical history, from the first period of it to the year 733, about which time he died. His fame for learning was so great that the pope sent for him to Rome ; but Bede declined the honour proposed to him : and I am glad he did ; for, otherwise, perhaps, his history would never have been written, and then we should have been almost as ignorant of his times as he was of ours.

The death of Alfred was an important and calamitous event to the English. His successors, whose reigns we cannot record particularly, though we may just name them, were in a continual state of warfare with each other, or with the Danes, until the latter obtained, for a time, the dominion over the Saxon princes. Edward the Elder, who was Alfred's son, obtained the throne in 901, and reigned twenty-four years, with some renown as a warrior ; having for his enemies chiefly the Danes and the men of the North.

Athelstan, his son, came to the crown in 925, and retained it nearly sixteen years. He endeavoured to manage the Danes by treaty, and made one of their chiefs king of Northumberland; but he soon found that they were not to be so trusted with safety. He contended successfully against both them and the Scots; and gained some reputation as a civil governor, in addition to his military fame. He died peaceably at Gloucester. Edmund, his brother, had enjoyed his dignity but two years when he was murdered by a robber at his own table.

I hope I am not brief and tiresome at the same time, while I thus dismiss a line of princes from our notice. We are making room for the great events that are to follow, and shall soon pass to another important period in our history.

The Danes seemed, generally, to regard the death of a king as an opportunity to be troublesome. Edred became king in 946. He was warlike, but superstitious, and gave much power to the monks; particularly to Dunstan their leader. At the death of Edred,

the unfortunate Edwy succeeded to the throne, and, disdaining the power of that haughty monk and his brethren, ventured to resist, and banished Dunstan from the kingdom; but Dunstan found means to retain his power and to destroy that of Edwy, whose wife was torn from him and eventually put to death in a most cruel manner. Edwy himself died soon afterwards, and left the throne to Edgar his younger brother. This prince had ability and success, but was governed by bad priests and worse passions. He died in 975. His eldest son Edward reigned next, but was murdered, three years afterwards, by his wicked stepmother, who placed her son Ethelred on the throne. England now again was overspread with barbarians; and the Danes in Britain obtained by degrees the finest parts of the country, whilst their brethren from abroad made continual descents on the coast. Various methods were tried to get rid of these troublesome intruders: sometimes they were massacred by thousands; afterwards peace with them was purchased with money; but

still they gained power. . In the year 1014, Sweyn, their king, drove Ethelred, his queen, and two sons, out of England into Normandy. After a reign of about a year. Sweyn was killed, and was succeeded by his son, Canute the Great, as he was called. It is true that Ethelred, returning, drove Canute, in turn, out of England, and he retired to Denmark, to collect additional forces. With these he returned, and forced the English king Edmund, surnamed Ironside the son and successor of Ethelred, to divide his dominions with him. It was not long before Edmund was put to death; and then Canute, the Dane, became king of the whole country. Thus the Danes obtained the dominion in England at last, but they retained it only for a short time. Canute governed with much advantage to his subjects for twenty years; but his sons and successors, Harefoot and Hardiknute, whose united reigns did not amount to six years, were so weak and wicked that, on the death of the latter, the English revolted, and re-established their own princes on the throne; and

the famed Edward, commonly called the Confessor, became king in 1042. He was a weak superstitious monarch, much governed by the monks and ecclesiastics, of whom I shall here give a short account ; for their institutions became about this time of great importance in Europe, and many results of their influence and labours are even now to be traced in our country.

Now, what is a monk? Anciently, by this word was meant one who retired from the world to some spot where he could live in absolute solitude. Such were hermits and anchorets, who withdrew into deserts and made devotional meditation the sole business of life. We know, however, that religion requires other duties than such as merely concern ourselves ; and a man deserves even less than parched peas and water who does nothing for society. Many, however, were driven into deserts, and dens and caves of the earth, by persecution, in the early ages of the church ; and this being the case with some very extraordinary persons, their example was imitated after the necessity

volumes, became the only historians of those unlettered ages. Our story of Britain would have wanted a thousand years, had it not been for a few of those laborious students within their cloistered walls.

Then there was another sort of clergy, called the *secular*, such as bishops and parish priests; and these are continued with us to the present time. We have seen that churches for public worship, though mean, were built by the ancient British Christians; but they were not *parish* churches; for no particular ground, or boundary, was assigned to them. Some say that England was divided into parishes in the seventh century; perhaps it was done hardly so soon. Some time after, however, churches, and parishes, and ministers, began to be appointed in this way : the great lords, who had much land belonging to them, built churches on their own estates for their tenants, on condition that they should maintain a clergyman out of their fruits. It was settled that a tenth of the produce was to be set apart for this purpose; and thus tithes were first fixed and paid

in England. Bishops had the rule over many parishes, and had larger revenues, as at present.

Now I shall be sorry if the little I have said should appear tiresome and dry; because it is needful to attend to these things before we can properly understand our history.

We have just introduced Edward *the Confessor*. That title we must take a little notice of. At the time when professed Christians were few, and pagans many, those who owned our religion did so with danger. They were called *confessors*, because they acknowledged their belief at all hazards, and were ready to support it by suffering martyrdom. The Church of Rome, in time, made a sort of honorary title of this designation, and bestowed it frequently on those who were its best friends. Such was Edward, who, on account of his devotion and munificence to the clergy, was called *the Confessor*; and he still retains that name in our histories.

It happened well for this quiet king that the Danes in England had become so mixed

with the Saxons as to have nearly the same interests and feelings. The English and these were almost one people, and had nearly left off fighting with each other ; so that only foreign enemies were now to be dreaded. Unhappily, through the weakness, or partiality, of Edward, an occasion was given, which soon afterwards brought the sword, with fresh invaders, to our shores. The Normans, of whom we have spoken before, had proceeded from the north of Europe, and settled on a part of the coast of France, which, from them, was called Normandy. Now Edward, whilst a lad, had been educated in Normandy, and very fond he was of that country. The people were superior to the English in knowledge and politeness, and were famous for working themselves into favour. They soon surrounded Edward, after he had ascended the English throne, and became his favourite courtiers. Their language, manners, and customs, soon became fashionable in England ; their dress, behaviour, and entertainments, were copied ; and nothing was thought of old Saxon

usages. Normans too were promoted in the church, and obtained the best livings and revenues which the king could bestow.

These things made the English jealous; particularly Earl Godwin, who, though the king had married his daughter, was waiting an opportunity to dispute the government with him. He raised forces, and prepared a fleet; but, before he could execute his chief intentions, he died, leaving them to be accomplished by his son Harold, who seemed to possess more qualifications than Godwin himself for the object in view. But Edward had determined to provide another ruler for England than Harold, even in case of his own death : so he secretly turned his eye upon the leader, or duke, of the Normans, whom he encouraged to believe that the crown would one day be his.

This duke was named William; and, though his mother was only a tanner's daughter, his father was the ruler of Normandy, and, at his death, left his dominions to this ambitious son.

Edward the Confessor died after he had

reigned twenty-five years, and Harold found no difficulty in ascending the vacant throne; for he had taken care to make himself a favourite with the people, whom he had defended from the Welsh and other enemies. But William, Duke of Normandy, had not forgotten his own hopes and expectations, derived from the Confessor's promises; and he determined to make good his claim. He, therefore, collected an army of 60,000 men, and equipped a fleet of three thousand vessels, great and small, for this grand occasion. It was altogether, perhaps, the finest armament which that age had seen. The discipline of the men, the beauty and vigour of the horses, the lustre of the arms and the accoutrements of both, with the high and renowned names of the leaders, and, above all, the boldness of the enterprise, made surrounding nations look with amazement and unusual interest to the event. The Norman invasion, indeed, still occupies a chief place amongst the most important occurrences of our British story. I shall, therefore, be more particular in my account of it than in the

relation of other battles and usurpations, and shall copy from the modern historian, A. Thierry.

“ Before William set out, he took care to embarrass Harold as much as he could, and divert his attention, by inciting a Norwegian chief, named Halfagar, to invade England just before him. This Halfagar, with three hundred vessels and a great number of men, sailed up the Humber, and committed terrible ravages, which the English there could not resist. Harold lost no time in marching to give battle. He had acquired the respect and affections of the people, and soon found himself in a condition to attack his enemies, whom he totally defeated: The Norwegian chiefs were slain, and their fleet fell into his hands.

“ But, unhappily, whilst these enemies were departing, others were approaching ; and the same breeze which curled the triumphal English banners, filled the Norman sails, and wafted them towards our southern coasts. It happened, unfortunately, that the vessels which had been placed by

Harold to cruise and watch on those seas, had, just before, retired for want of provisions. William's troops, therefore, landed without any resistance, at Pevensey, near Hastings, on the 28th of September, in the year 1066, three days only after Harold's victory over the Norwegians. The archers landed first; they wore short garments, and had their hair cut close. Next followed the horsemen, wearing steel head-pieces, tunics, and cuirasses—that is, cloaks and body-armour—and armed with long heavy spears and straight two-edged swords. After them came the workmen of the army, pioneers, carpenters, and smiths, who unloaded on the shore, piece by piece, *three wooden castles*, framed and prepared beforehand. The Duke was the last that came ashore; and, in setting his foot upon the land, he made a false step, and fell on his face. A murmur immediately arose, and some voices uttered alarm at so unlucky an incident. But William, rising instantly, said, 'What is the matter? I have grasped this land with my hands; and it is mine, it is yours!'

This quick reply prevented the effect of the bad omen.

“The army marched towards Hastings. Near that place, the encampment was traced, and the wooden castles were erected and furnished with provisions, that they might serve as a retreat, in case of necessity. Bodies of troops went over the neighbouring country, plundering and burning the houses. The English fled from their dwellings, concealed their furniture and cattle, and flocked to the churches and church-yards, which they thought the most secure asylum from enemies, who, they supposed, were Christians, like themselves. But the Normans cared too much just then about booty to respect those buildings, and chased the fugitives from them.

“Harold was at York, wounded and resting from his fatigues, when a messenger came, in great haste, to tell him that William of Normandy had landed, and planted his standard on the English soil. He marched towards the south, with his victorious army, publishing, as he passed along, an order to all his chiefs of counties to put their fighting

men under arms, and lead them to London. Harold, however, was too impatient to allow time for all his forces to assemble. He could not master his eagerness for coming to an engagement with the foreigners, especially when he learned what ravages they were committing. Besides, he hoped to take his enemy by surprise; but the Norman camp was too well guarded for this; and early intelligence was conveyed to William of Harold's approach. Finding that his near arrival was known, Harold halted at seven miles' distance from the Duke's quarters, and thought proper to entrench himself behind banks, ditches, and palisades, and wait to be attacked. Some of the English captains now advised their king to avoid a battle, and ravage the country to prevent the Normans doing so. 'Never,' replied Harold, 'will I ravage the country committed to my care. I will rather try the chance of war with the few men I have.'

“But the renowned Norman Duke, notwithstanding his great preparations, wished still to avoid an engagement; and was deter-

mined to try what craft would do, before he tried the sword. So he sent a monk to Harold, with a message containing three propositions : first, to resign his crown quietly, at his bidding ; secondly, to refer it to the decision of the pope ; thirdly, to try the question by single combat. Harold simply replied 'No' to each of these requisitions. William, not at all ruffled, sent again, and offered Harold all the country north of the Humber, if he would submit ; otherwise he denounced him as a perjured deceiver, and laid the consequences before him. But the English monarch treated all these messages with scorn, and prepared for battle.

" On the ground, which still bears the name of Battle, the English army occupied a long chain of hills, fortified on all sides with stakes and osier hurdles. In the night of October 13th, William informed the Normans that the next day would be the day of battle. The Normans, who had more of the decent forms of religion about them than the English, began to offer up prayers and to sing litanies with the monks. They

employed their remaining time in confessing their sins and receiving the sacrament, according to the practice of the Romish Church. I know not how much of real religion there was in this ; but I am quite sure there was much *irreligion* in the conduct of the Saxons, who spent the night, which was to be the last of their lives to thousands, in revelry and drinking, alike unmindful of their present safety and future danger.

“ The weapons of the Normans were chiefly swords, spears, bows, and cross-bows ; which last were of steel, and carried a great way : so, indeed, did many of the other bows, which were as high as a man, and were placed upright for use. The Duke was mounted on a fine Spanish horse ; and from his neck were suspended many venerated relics of Saints, on which Harold, when a youth, and in Normandy, had been compelled by William to swear that he would aid him to obtain the kingdom. The Duke had also something else at his side, which, perhaps, he and his followers regarded as of more importance to their success than all

their military force. It was a standard, which had been sent to Rome, and had been there blessed by the pope, who had also promised victory to it.

“As the troops began to advance, the Duke raised his voice, and made a speech to the following purport :—‘ Remember to fight well, and put all to death ; for, if we conquer, we shall all be rich ; what I gain, you will gain ; if I conquer, you will conquer ; if I take the land, you will have it. Know, however, that I am come hither not only to obtain my right, but also to avenge our whole race for the felonies, perjuries, and treacheries of these English. They put to death men, women, and children ; they decimated* the companions of my kinsman, Auvré, and took his life. Come on, then, and let us chastise them for their misdeeds.’

“ The Saxons, or English, still occupied their fortified camp. In addition to the common arms of the times, they employed some peculiar to themselves. Such were the battle-

* Killed one in ten.

axe, and mace, or club. The first of these had a kind of hatchet, with a spear at the end, fixed on a short pole, with which dreadful execution was done by such as were expert in the use. The mace, or club, was an oval-shaped lump of iron, full of spikes, having a long and stout handle, which was even still more destructive, when wielded by powerful men.

“ As soon as the Normans came within a proper distance, the archers began to discharge their arrows. The footmen and horsemen then advanced to the English works, and endeavoured to force them. But Harold and his men formed themselves about their standard planted in the ground, and received the assailants with tremendous blows of their ponderous clubs and axes, which broke their enemies' spears and coats of mail.

“ The Normans began to fall back, and produced confusion in their leader's ranks. There was even a rumour that William was killed, and many began to flee; but the Duke, shewing himself at the critical mo-

ment, urged them back to the fight : still they could not force an entrance into the English camp. He now thought of, and practised, one of those expedients, by which the brave but unwary warrior has often fallen before the crafty and more experienced foe. He ordered a thousand horse to advance, and then immediately gallop away as if in flight. The English rushed into the snare. They left their camp, and tumultuously followed the enemy, who no sooner perceived that they were off their guard, and their ranks broken, than they faced about, and, assailing the English on all sides at once, gave them no time nor room to raise their heavy arms. Harold, who had already been wounded, now received an arrow in his forehead, and fell dead, with his two brothers, at the foot of their standard, which they had remained within their camp to defend. The remnant of the English army, without a chief, and without a standard, prolonged the fight until darkness prevented the combatants from distinguishing each other.

“ Such was the battle of Hastings. In the

morning, the conqueror drew up his troops before him, and called over the names of those who had followed him to the conflict. But many, many, answered not! Whole ranks of those who had dreamed of riches and of power lay dead beside their Saxon foes. The fortunate survivors had the larger booty. After the bodies of the English had been stripped of every thing valuable, their female relatives came trembling to bury them on the field. The monks of Waltham humbly begged of William the body of Harold, who had been their benefactor. Their request was granted; but it was with difficulty that his mangled corpse was discovered among the slain. They conveyed it to Waltham, in the abbey church of which it was mournfully interred."



WILLIAM I.

SURNAMED THE CONQUEROR.

Born, 1023. Began to reign, 1066.

Reigned 20 years, 10 months, 25 days. Died of a fall from his horse, 1087, aged 63.

WILLIAM THE FIRST, as the Conqueror known,
By the battle of Hastings ascended the throne.
His laws were all made in the Norman tongue;
And at eight every evening the *curfew* was rung,
When each English subject, by Royal desire,
Extinguish'd his candle, and put out his fire.
He bridled the kingdom with forts round the border;
And the Tower of London was built by his order.

CHAPTER V.

SAXON CUSTOMS.—ORDEALS.—NORMAN CONQUEST.
—FEUDAL SYSTEM.

In the last chapter we learned the end of the power of the Britons, the Romans, the Danes, and the Saxons. William, having gained the battle, was soon after crowned, and presently evinced to the people what sort of a government that of the Normans was to be. The design of the conqueror was not merely to reign, but to tyrannize; not only to give the Normans a residence here, but to make them *lords*, and the English *slaves*, and to take away their very name as a people; nay to suppress their language, and force the Norman French into Saxon mouths, if possible. In these matters, however, he was not to have his own way

exactly. The English nation, and tongue, and institutions, and manners, were not so easily to be destroyed as an army. The Normans could not do as the Saxons had done before them : and we must say a word or two respecting the English as a people, at the period of the Conquest, before we relate farther the proceedings of their Norman rulers.

Three sorts, or conditions, of men were found in England, in the days of the Saxon dominion—the nobles, the freemen, and the slaves. The nobles were called *thanes* and *earls* ; and it was very seldom that the lower ranks could rise, notwithstanding some laws of Athelstan, which encouraged such ambition. For instance, a merchant who had been three long voyages on his own account, was entitled to assume the dignity of thane ; and a ceorle, or churl, that is, a husbandman, who had been able to purchase a certain extent of land, and possessed a chapel, a kitchen, a hall, and a bell, was raised to the same degree.

The cities of England, at the time of the

Conquest, appear to have been little better than villages. Many of them contained not more than two or three hundred houses; and these were built in a wide straggling manner. As for the country generally, much of it was in a wild or woodland state. The cultivated parts were farmed by the lower orders of freemen, who paid their literal *land lords* a certain portion of rent, not in money, but in agricultural produce.

The most numerous ranks were those of the villains, or slaves, who were the absolute property of their masters, and unable to call any thing their own. These were principally prisoners, taken in the numerous battles among the small Saxon states, or their descendants. Besides this, it was very common for parents to sell their children as slaves; nay, they would, sometimes, gamble and sell themselves. However, masters were in some sort answerable for extreme cruelty to their purchased servants. If they struck out an eye, or a tooth, the slave recovered his liberty; if death was inflicted, the slayer paid a fine to the king.

The great lords and abbots possessed authority and power as absolute governors in their own districts, and could punish murderers and robbers at their pleasure ; but the mischief was, that many of those lords were amongst the worst of robbers themselves, and protected others of the same character, to form forces for their own purposes. Something more like regular government existed in towns.

After all, the people in those days were less ruled by laws than by power and customs. Some of these were, indeed, curious. A man's life was priced according to his rank ; and the fine was exacted of the murderer in proportion to the quality of his victim. The value of *the king's head* was about thirteen hundred pounds of our money : that of the prince, half as much ; a bishop's was valued at three hundred pounds ; a thane's, or a clergyman's, at about one hundred ; a churl's, at about ten pounds !

The price of *wounds*, too, was fixed in the same way. A wound of an inch long,

under the hair, incurred the penalty of a shilling; in the face, two shillings; and thirty shillings for the loss of an ear. But the rules of evidence, with regard to the commission of crimes, were still more strange and defective. If two parties were accused, he who could bring the greatest number of persons, though utter strangers to the circumstance, to swear that he was innocent, was acquitted. But when a question about a fact became too puzzling for the court to decide, recourse was had to single combat, or to a kind of lot, or, more frequently, to the trial by *ordeal*. The latter was an appeal to what they called *the judgment of God*, and was practised thus : red hot irons, generally ploughshares, were placed at irregular distances on the ground. The accused party was blindfolded, and if he could then step safely between the irons, he was pronounced innocent—if otherwise, guilty. The same sort of absurdity was sometimes adopted by means of hot or cold water.

We will now just step to market with old Editha and her husband, yonder, and learn

the prices of cattle and provisions. "Honest Ceorle, what d'ye want for that clever little nag?"—"Thirty-six shillings, Gaffer."—"Too much, too much! I will give thee thirty."—"Gaffer, thou shalt have him."—"So! ye are selling beeves [oxen]; how go they?"—"Twelve shillings, ten shillings, or nine shillings."—"Too dear!—Nay, nay, I will buy me four sheep for the same!"—"Nay again, Gaffer, take Edith's advice. Save thy coin till thou hast a hundred and twenty shillings, to buy the hide of land of the Thane." *

With regard to the manners of the Saxon-English, perhaps the less we say about them the better. They were, in general, a rude uncultivated people; ignorant of letters, unskilled in mechanical arts, untamed to submission; unfit for freedom, their best qualities were hospitality and military courage. The Norman Conquest, notwithstanding its dreadful evils, introduced some benefits, amongst which were lessons in arts

* A hide of land was about a hundred acres.

and knowledge, in which the nations of the continent had made much greater progress than the inhabitants of Britain.

The Conqueror made good his promises to his great captains, and divided amongst them the spoils of England, as fast as he could gain possession of it ; but not without stipulating certain conditions of future service and obedience from them. We must just observe here that William was not *King*, but *Duke* of Normandy. He was the head of a number of chieftains, who all exercised authority and military dominion in their separate territories. They exacted service in arms, at their bidding, of those who occupied their domains under them ; while they resided themselves in their fortified castles, glorying in the pride and power of their numerous retainers. William transplanted this system into England. The portions of land distributed to the Normans were called *fiefs*, that is, possessions held of a superior, on certain conditions. In time, however, these estates became hereditary : and thus many of our present nobility, who

come of ancient families, acquired their princely estates.

The government and powers of these lordly persons were called the *feudal system*. The people subjected to these several military rulers were called *vassals*, or retainers ; they took up arms at their lords' bidding, as the lords themselves did at the command of the king. This was the way in which forces were raised, and wars carried on, for several ages, in Europe. Unfortunately, however, for kings, at that time, they had less influence over their lords, than the lords had over their vassals ; and, whilst the latter could maintain themselves in their strong castles with numerous retainers, the sovereign was often set at defiance. This being the case, and law and justice having no other guardians than warriors, might generally overcame right, and private wrongs had a very uncertain remedy. Barons held courts under their own authority ; yet, in a certain way, they took the opinion of their vassals, whom they assembled. In like manner, the king, on important occasions, assembled his great

barons, and asked their advice and consent regarding his wars and enterprises; and we may here see something of the beginnings of those state councils which we now call *parliaments*.

We must now mention a few acts of William's reign. The Normans did not conquer the whole of England at the battle of Hastings. Risings in various parts kept them constantly employed and anxious. Had the English possessed a leader, with Harold's prowess and with a better title to the throne, they would probably have rallied under him, and endeavoured by a second effort to repel the invaders. What they did was only enough to exasperate their new ruler, without any prospect of shaking off his yoke. The vengeance of William was shewn by the most dreadful acts of cruelty and oppression. It is true, that at first he was politic enough to make a show of clemency and justice, where he could do so without much cost to himself. He, however, soon found an excuse, in the insurrections of some, to declare himself a

tyrant over all. Many fled from these oppressions to other countries ; and Malcolm, King of Scotland, kindly received the exiles. Amongst the horrors of this reign, history particularly records that, in order to avenge himself on the Northumbrians for the resistance they had made, and to prevent the possibility of their doing the like again, William gave orders for laying their country entirely waste. The houses were reduced to ashes ; the cattle were seized and driven away ; the instruments of husbandry were destroyed ; and the inhabitants were compelled either to flee into Scotland, or to linger miserably in the woods, perishing from cold and hunger. The lives of a hundred thousand persons are thought to have been sacrificed thus to the fury of the Norman conqueror ; and it is said that, even now, Northumberland bears proofs of that dreadful fact.

In all other parts of the kingdom, the name of Englishman was enough to bring vengeance on any who had property to lose. Ancient and honourable families were re-

duced to beggary ; whilst the lower orders became absolute slaves to the triumphant Normans. By introducing the feudal law, of which we have spoken, William took care to keep the military power under himself in the hands of those who had enabled him to subdue the kingdom. As to the church, he was resolved to rule there also. The English archbishop, Stigand, and other ecclesiastics, were removed, and Normans put in their places.

Perhaps the most ridiculous act of William's reign, but which shewed, more than any other, his determination against the English, was his attempt to abolish their very language. For this purpose, he enacted that, in all schools throughout the kingdom, the youth should be instructed in the Norman French tongue. Law proceedings were ordered to be conducted in the French language ; and the statutes were written in it. No other speech was used at court ; and, in fact, such pains were taken, that, although the English language still triumphed over the other, much of the French became mixed

with it, and remains even to this day in use.

The punishments which this king most commonly inflicted on those who fell under his particular displeasure were, seizure of their estates and imprisonment, if of noble rank ; and death, or lopping off the hands, and plucking out the eyes, of men of more humble condition.

But William was not without his own troubles and disquietudes. His Norman subjects, both here and on the continent, revolted in consequence of the daily increasing tyranny of their ruler. These commotions were repressed and punished ; but there was more work of the same sort going on elsewhere, and in a quarter which was more afflictive to the king. This was the rebellion, in Normandy, of his own son, Robert, who, assisted by the French king and others, engaged in open war, and might have shaken his father's power on the continent, had it not been for a very singular occurrence. Robert encountered his father, unknowingly, in a combat, under the walls

of a castle, and had unhorsed and wounded the old warrior before he discovered the real character of his opponent. Hereupon he very dutifully assisted his father to rise, and, expressing contrition, was induced to discontinue his rebellion.

The next article to be noticed, amongst the acts of this king, is the Domesday Book, of which, I dare say, you have heard before. I need not describe it farther than by saying that William employed persons six years in taking an account of every estate in the kingdom;—its extent, value, and description, with the name of the proprietor, and the number of persons resident upon it. The object of this was to assist the sovereign in the taxation of the country. As antiquaries are not agreed as to the meaning of the word applied to this register, I shall not trouble my readers with it. It still exists in the hands of our government, and is exceedingly curious for the information it affords of the state of England at that period.

The jealous despotism of this king was particularly conspicuous in the *curfew*, or

cover-fire bell, which used to be rung at eight o'clock every evening, at which time all fires and lights were to be extinguished, and the whole nation was expected to go to bed then at his bidding. This was to prevent conspiracies against his government, which he thought were likely to be planned in the night.

The last act of William's tyranny in England which I shall mention, was the formation of the New Forest in Hampshire. Like others of those ages who had power to please themselves, he employed the intervals of peace with man in making war upon the wild inhabitants of the land. Hunting was his favourite recreation; and, to indulge himself in it, he, not contented with the ancient woods reserved for the royal huntsman, determined to make an artificial chase, in the neighbourhood of his residence, at Winchester. He therefore laid waste the country for an extent of thirty miles, expelled the inhabitants from their houses, seized their property, and even demolished churches and convents, and made no compensation for the

injury. At the same time, he made the most cruel laws against any who should presume to hunt therein; taking out the eyes of those who killed any of his deer; whilst the killing of a man elsewhere might be settled for by a small sum of money.

And now we come to the close of this reign. William was in France, engaged in a war with the king of that country, when his horse starting with him, produced a slight bruise, which, however, he being at that time in ill health, soon convinced him that his end was approaching. Remorse, and something like contrition, on account of the cruelties he had long practised, then took possession of his mind. He vainly endeavoured, by presents to churches and monasteries, to atone for his past sins. He expired September 9th, 1087, in the sixty-third year of his age, in the twenty-first year of his reign over England, and the fifty-fourth of his rule in Normandy.

The character of this monarch is sufficiently expressed in the record of his reign. His honours did not accompany him to the

grave. The funeral was disturbed by the interference of a Norman, who insisted that the ground, whereon the church in which he was to be buried had been built by William, was his by right ; and, until he was satisfied, he would not suffer the interment to go on. At last, one or two terrified priests only remained to give burial to the far-famed Conqueror of England.

We have paid longer attention to the events of William's conquest and reign than we should have done if they had not been of the first importance in the story of our country. In the succeeding reigns we shall go upon the plan of being particular in our narration only when memorable changes took place ; but, as these did not occur in every king's time, we shall sometimes give only a few words to a reign. Our object is the history of the country, rather than a biography of its kings.



WILLIAM II.

SURNAMED RUFUS.

Born, 1056. Began to reign, 1087.

Reigned 12 years, 10 months, 24 days. Killed by an arrow, while hunting, 1100, aged about 43.

WILLIAM, styled *Rufus*, from having *red hair*,
Of virtues possess'd but a moderate share ;
But, though he was one whom we covetous call,
He built the famed structure call'd Westminster Hall.
Walter Tyrrel, his fav'rite, whilst hunting one day,
Attempted a deer with an arrow to slay ;
But, missing his aim, struck the King to the heart,
And the body was carried away in a cart.

The Conqueror had five daughters and three sons. He left his French possessions to his eldest son, Robert. England he gave

to William; whilst Henry had nothing but the small property of his mother: yet his father foretold, at the same time that he made this will, that Henry would one day exceed both his brothers in opulence and power.

William Rufus, or *Red-hair*, was too much like his father to give the English many hopes of good from the change. The Normans generally preferred his more noble-minded brother Robert; and a conspiracy against the new king was soon commenced. William had the prudence to make friends of his English subjects, who were glad enough to support him, in the hope of a little favour in return. They found, however, that when the king had conquered and punished his enemies he thought little of his friends. They were oppressed as before; and the king's power seemed equal to his will, as a tyrannical ruler.

He was, however, by no means satisfied with England alone, but wished to possess Normandy also, that he might be as powerful as his father had been. At length, he found

means to get that province under his dominion. Robert, a romantic warrior, became impatient to distinguish himself in the grand enterprise of the times, the Crusades, of which we shall say something presently. In fact, he sold his inheritance to his brother William for a sum of money, and set out with a magnificent train to the Holy Land, in company with other renowned warriors of Europe.

William raised the money for this purchase by the most violent extortions. Even the religious houses were compelled to melt down their plate at his bidding. But Normandy, when gained, procured him little advantage. The barons of that province were not pleased with the bargain, and gave alarming proofs of their discontent. William went over to reduce them to submission, which he had scarcely accomplished, when he was obliged to return. Soon after, another chieftain resolved to follow the example of Robert, and offered his province of Guienne to William for a sum of money. The king agreed, but was prevented by death

from completing the bargain : for, whilst hunting in the New Forest, Walter Tyrrel, a French gentleman, impatient, as it is said, to shew his skill in archery, let fly an arrow at a stag, which, glancing against a tree, struck the king and killed him on the spot. Tyrrel, alarmed for himself, put spurs to his horse, and, without revealing the matter, embarked for France, and joined the Crusade, which was then setting out. The body of the king was found by the country-people, and buried without any pomp at Winchester.

271632A

CHAPTER VI.

CRUSADES.

There is nothing in the history of Europe which acquaints us so well with the character and temper of former ages as the Crusades, or expeditions of Christian princes to drive the infidels, or Turks and Saracens, from the Holy Land. The pilgrims, who had long been used to visit the objects of interest in Jerusalem, and pay their devotions there, were exposed to the greatest extortions and perils when the Saracens and Turks gained possession of that country ; and, as they returned, they filled Europe with indignation against those Mohammedan barbarians. The pope had, more than once, thought of engaging the powers of Christendom against them;

but it was reserved for a meaner agent to set that surprising scheme in motion.

One poor pilgrim, who had made the journey to Jerusalem, was called Peter the Hermit. He had seen and known what the sufferings and dangers of the pilgrims really were, and he determined to traverse Europe till he could rouse the nations to interfere. At length, he proposed the enterprise to Martin II. then pope, who pondered awhile on the mighty project. He thought well enough of it, in time, to call a council of four thousand churchmen, and thirty thousand other persons. No building could contain the multitude, and the assembly was held in a plain. It was not to be supposed that so many would come together for nothing ; the zeal which had brought them thither aided the power of the harangues made by the pope and the hermit ; the whole multitude suddenly and violently declared for the war, and solemnly devoted themselves to the undertaking. Still it was necessary to engage the princes of Christendom in the business ; the pope, therefore, despatched

Peter to the most warlike and powerful courts; and afterwards he summoned another great council, at which some of the chief princes, prelates, and nobles of Europe attended. The pope and the pilgrim resumed their inspiring orations, when the assembly, as if with one voice, exclaimed, "It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" These memorable words became the signal of the Crusaders. The cross, in Latin *crux*, which gave name to the enterprise, was the badge which distinguished those romantic adventurers, and was affixed to the right shoulder of each. Men of all ranks flew to arms. Princes, as we have seen, sold their dominions, deeming them of small account in the scale with the motives for this holy war. William Rufus, we have said, was determined to make what profit he could of these events, though he had no inclination to join in the scheme. The story of Britain does not require, nor does it here admit of, a history of the Crusades, which were repeated, and lasted many years. It will suffice at present to say that above seven

hundred thousand persons made their way into Asia. After vast losses from the multiplied dangers of the march, an army of them besieged Jerusalem, and, in about five weeks, took it, when those warriors shewed themselves utterly unmindful of the religion and example of Him whose name they bore, for they assisted in a most dreadful slaughter of the inhabitants, who had yielded to their arms ; and they then made Godfrey of Bouillon King of Jerusalem.



HENRY I.

SURNAMED BEAUCLERC.

Born, 1068. Began to reign, 1100.

Reigned 35 years, 4 months. Died, 1135, aged 67.

KING HENRY THE FIRST, for his learning much famed,
Beauclerc, or fine scholar, was justly surnamed.
His subjects revered him, and not without cause;
He lighten'd their burdens, restored their old laws,
Abolish'd the curfew, bad money put down,
And kindly remitted the debts of the crown.
But Henry was frail, and licentious beside,
And at last by a surfeit of lampreys he died.

William Rufus being dead, there is no doubt that the crown of England belonged of right to his elder brother, Robert; and,

admired as that prince was, and possessed of an excellent title, there is as little doubt that he would have obtained it, had he been where Henry was at the death of Rufus. But we have noticed his departure for Palestine ; and thereby he lost his English dominions. Henry was hunting in another part of the New Forest, when intelligence of William's fate reached him. Like Walter Tyrrel, he too put spurs to his horse, but it was with a different intention. He determined on seizing the crown ; and hurried to Winchester in order to secure the royal treasure, which, with little resistance, was abandoned to him. With money and address, he soon overcame the scruples of the nobles and prelates to his accession ; for, in less than three days, he was crowned by the Bishop of London. The absent prince had no friends powerful enough to defend his right, and Henry became king ; but he was evidently a usurper. Sensible of this, he was careful, by promises at least, to gain the good-will of his subjects.

One of the first acts of his reign was the

of the nobility, sailed in another vessel; but, they and the crew getting careless with drinking, the vessel struck upon a rock and went to pieces. One man only escaped on a mast, to tell the doleful tale. Above a hundred and forty individuals of the chief families of England thus found their death with the prince. Henry, though he lived some years after this, is said never to have smiled again. He died on the 1st of December, 1135, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign, leaving, by will, his daughter Matilda, or Maud, heiress to his dominions.

This king, it is evident, possessed great abilities, and had made unusual progress in the acquirements of the age. His learning was so much beyond that of others, who were not ecclesiastics, that he obtained the surname of *Beauclerc*, or *the Scholar*. Had his moral principles been equal to his knowledge, he would have been reckoned amongst the great men of Europe, though he had not been king of England.



STEPHEN,

SURNAMED OF BLOIS.

Born, 1085. Began to reign, 1135.

Reigned 18 years, 10 months, 23 days. Died, 1154, aged about 68.

King Henry's demise was no sooner made known,
Than STEPHEN contrived to step up to the throne;
By arts and by bribes he the clergy secured,
And by popular actions the people allured,
And though, for a time, through MATILDA's success,
He felt, as a captive, the deepest distress,
Yet Fortune once more placed the crown on his brow,
And there it continued till death laid him low.

One of the daughters of William the Conqueror was named Adela : she had married a French count, and had two sons, Stephen

and Henry. So Stephen, grandson of the first Norman king of England, thought he had a better right to the throne than his cousin, Matilda, daughter of Henry I. It is certain he had quite as much title to it as Henry had ; and he determined not to be very scrupulous, but to make use of all his power and interest. These, he knew, were considerable ; owing chiefly to the partiality and munificence of the late king, who little thought that he was strengthening a candidate for his kingdom. Stephen had vowed to support the claim of Matilda, and appeared full of zeal in her cause during Henry's lifetime ; but now the case was quite altered. He had taken care to make himself approve by the nobles and other persons of influence so he stepped up to the throne, and was crowned on the 22nd of December, 1135. As usual with those who unjustly seize a crown Stephen humoured his subjects for a while especially those possessed of power. The barons, in particular, were gratified with leave to build fortified castles, as they wished : and it is supposed that not less than

fifteen hundred were erected by them during this reign. The clergy, too, obtained value for their submission in new powers and privileges; whilst the troops who guarded the throne took leave to pay themselves, at their pleasure, by plundering the defenceless people.

But Stephen had not the good fortune or the abilities of Henry, whose example he followed. Matilda had powerful friends; and these soon convinced Stephen of the uncertainties and dangers of his situation. David, King of Scotland, Matilda's uncle, entered England with an army. However, he was defeated in an encounter with the English, called *the battle of the Standard*.

Soon after this, Matilda having collected her forces and invaded England, the nation was involved in civil war from one end to the other on account of the two claimants of the throne. We cannot recount the various battles that ensued; suffice it to say that Stephen at length found his side the weakest. The Earl of Gloucester, who fought for Matilda, defeated Stephen, and took him

prisoner ; so Matilda was acknowledged and crowned. This took place in 1141.

But this now prosperous queen had not prudence enough for her situation. She was haughty, imperious, and at the same time weak in her conduct. Stephen found means to place himself again at the head of an army, and the civil war was renewed with greater fury than ever. For a long time, it was hard to say which party had the advantage. At length, Matilda fled, and retired into Normandy, leaving Stephen in possession of a still precarious throne. However, he retained it till his death, which happened in 1154, nineteen years after he had first usurped it.

This king, though ambition urged him to trample on the presumed rights of his cousin, was not without qualities, which, with a better title, might have made him a good king. But the contention in which he involved the kingdom made his reign peculiarly disastrous and ruinous to the best interests of the realm.



HENRY II. PLANTAGENET,

SURNAMED CURTMANTLE, AND FITZEMPRESS.

Born, 1132. Began to reign, 1154.

Reigned 34 years, 7 months, 12 days. Died, 1189, aged 58.

**King HENRY THE SECOND, Plantagenet call'd,
In disputes and vexations was sadly enthrall'd:
His consort was jealous, his sons took up arms,
Proud Becket, too, fill'd him with serious alarms;
And when that Archbishop had met with his doom,
The Monarch was scourged by the side of his tomb;
Then London was paved that the streets might look pretty,
And houses no longer were thatch'd in the city.**

**This prince was the son of Matilda, with
whom Stephen had contended. He mounted
the throne without opposition, and soon**

made himself respected by his abilities and conduct as a ruler. He took vigorous measures to quell the disorders and repair the mischiefs of the preceding reign, and made law and justice once more conspicuous and effective.

This was a long and busy reign ; but we cannot do more than glance at the principal events of it. We must omit the incidents which arose out of Henry's foreign possessions, and confine ourselves to those which principally concerned England. The first of these that claims our notice must be the dispute with the renowned Thomas à Becket. This person was Archbishop of Canterbury, and the first man of English descent who had risen to power for the space of one hundred years. He had great abilities, and rendered himself the most conspicuous person of his time. He was the son of Gilbert Becket, or Beckie, a citizen of London, who joined the Crusades, but, being taken prisoner by the enemy, became a slave in a Mohammedan's household. Here this Gilbert Beckie obtained a wife, a Syrian wo-

man, by whose assistance he made his escape. His wife followed some time after; and, by a wonderful chance, found her way to London, and reclaimed her husband there. Gilbert had her baptised by the name of Matilda, and then married her according to the forms of his church. In the year 1119, Thomas à Becket was born, and his history was as remarkable as his parentage. At an early age he shewed signs of uncommon capacity, and was educated in the best manner of the period. He was introduced to the notice of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who favoured him much. At length, he was recommended to Henry II. and was advanced from one dignity to another, till he became chancellor of England. The pomp of his retinue, the sumptuousness of his furniture, the luxury of his table, and the munificence of his presents, corresponded with his high office and vast revenues. A little incident is related by one of his historians, which gives us a glimpse at the manners of the times. His apartments were every day, in winter, co-

vered with clean straw or hay, and in summer with green boughs or rushes; lest the gentlemen who crowded to his presence, but could not obtain a place at his table, should soil their clothes by sitting on the floor. Another characteristic anecdote is related: one day, as the king and his chancellor were riding together in London, they observed a beggar shivering with cold. "Would it not be well," said the king, "to give that poor man a coat, this cold day?"—"Undoubtedly," replied the chancellor.—"Then he shall have one presently," cried the king; and, seizing Becket's scarlet cloak, which was lined with ermine, he pulled it violently. The chancellor struggled in his own defence, and both had nearly tumbled in the mire, when Becket resigned his coat, which the king bestowed on the astonished beggar. But we must notice more important conflicts between the monarch and Becket, which took place after the latter had been made Archbishop of Canterbury.

This was the preferment which best gratified the ambition of the man. He now

gave all his power and influence to the Church, and began to dictate to Henry, who, in return, dictated to him; and, after long and bitter contentions, Henry got so far the advantage as to bring him to judgment for certain lands and moneys for which he was accountable; and a heavy fine was imposed. The pride and courage of the primate rose in proportion to his perils. He went from church to court arrayed in his sacred vestments; as soon as he arrived within the palace-gate, he took the cross in his hands, bore it aloft as his protection, and marched in that manner into the presence of his judges. He then forbade them, in the pope's name, to exercise any authority over him or the church, whose thunders he denounced against any who should presume to act against him. He refused to abide any trial, or hear a sentence at their tribunal; and, making his way from the palace, fled secretly from the kingdom.

The pope, and the people, and foreign princes, took the side of the Archbishop so powerfully, that Henry, though so proud and

his peace. Prince Henry was conducting an enterprise against his father, when he was taken ill and died. King Henry's remaining sons continued to plot against him, and, in the end, the vexations occasioned by their conduct caused his death, whilst engaged in forming a treaty in their favour. This event happened in France, in the fifty-eighth year of his age and the thirty-fifth of his reign. A king of moderate abilities could not probably have withstood the numerous powerful and determined enemies with whom Henry II. had to contend: but, notwithstanding all these, he possessed a larger territory and more power than any monarch of his time.



RICHARD I.

SURNAMED CŒUR DE LION.

Born, 1157. Began to reign, 1189.

*Reigned 9 years, 9 months. Died of a wound received in battle,
1199, aged 41.*

RICHARD THE FIRST next ascended the throne,
Whose valour, no doubt, to the reader is known.
With the *heart of a lion* all danger he faced,
And the famous Crusades with his presence he graced :
But forced, by a storm, upon Italy's coast,
This lover of fighting his liberty lost :
Thrice five tedious months in confinement he staid,
And then a vast sum for his ransom was paid.

This prince was a romantic warrior ; and,
of course, as he lived in the age of romance ,
he was a Crusader. He was scarcely seated

on the throne, when he began to devise means to engage in that favourite project of the European sovereigns, and set himself to raise money in every possible way. On coming to the crown, he had shewn compunction for his conduct during his father's life, and made a highly laudable alteration in his character and actions ; but, when the madness seized him of a crusade to the Holy Land, being naturally of an ardent impatient temper, and eager for military renown, he sacrificed every thing to promote that one object. He sold the revenues and lands of the crown, as well as its great offices, to the highest bidders. He parted with his power in Scotland, and all his authority there, to William, the king, for a moderate sum of money ; and extorted vast sums besides from all ranks of his people. Richard set out with a great armament, in conjunction with the king of France, who was bent on the same undertaking.

Great things were done, and still greater suffered. But Philip of France and Richard of England were too jealous and suspicious of

each other to act together long. After many splendid but in the end useless actions with the Mohammedans, he made a truce of three years with Saladin, Emperor of the Saracens. On his way home, he was unfortunately shipwrecked, and, determining to make his way by land through Germany, he put on the guise of a pilgrim ; but, betraying himself by his profuse expenditure, he was seized by the Duke of Austria, and thrown into prison : nor was he released until a sum of money had been raised in England for his ransom, which reduced the nation to great distress and poverty.

On his return, he found that his brother John had treacherously endeavoured to supplant him, and had nearly succeeded. The king of France, also, was at war with him. The English, however, were overjoyed at their monarch's release, and proud of the glory he had acquired. But his subsequent reign was of short duration : war soon called him to France ; and, in besieging the castle of Chaluz, he received an arrow in his shoulder. An unskilful surgeon made this

a mortal wound, and the renowned Cœur de Lion expired, in the tenth year of his reign, and forty-second of his age.

As a warrior, the reputation of Richard is equal to that of any who signalized themselves in that martial age. He was, on this account, much beloved by his English subjects, notwithstanding the severe taxations exacted on his account. Much that was generous and noble existed in his character; and these qualities gave promise of a good king, had he been contented to seek renown at home.



JOHN,

SURNAMED SANSTERRE, OR LACKLAND.

Born, 1167. Began to reign, 1199.

Reigned 17 years, 6 months, 13 days. Died, 1216, aged 49.

JOHN, surnamed *Lackland*, 't is said to his shame,
To the Pontiff of Rome a mean vassal became.
His barons, indignant, then marshall'd their bands,
And the famed Magna Charta obtain'd from his hands;
But charters and oaths were unable to bind
A monarch possessing so treach'rous a mind;
His standard he raised, and his influence tried;
But fever assail'd him, he sicken'd and died.

John, the youngest brother of Richard I.,
had given sufficient evidences of his bad character
before he obtained the crown; indeed,

his name is a disgrace to English history, even supposing he may have been represented worse than he really was. He was not without valour, but he seemed quite destitute of the principles and capacity needful for a governor. It is generally believed that he put to death Arthur, son of his eldest brother Geoffrey, who had a prior right to the crown. He afterwards so mismanaged matters that he was in daily terror of an invasion from the French; and was base enough, in that exigency, to lay his kingdom at the foot of the pope, for protection. The great barons highly resented this: and, after various actions, they brought John so low as to extort from him that grand declaration of privileges, called *Magna Charta*, which is even now considered as the foundation of English liberty; though it was in fact rather a renewal of the Saxon laws. John, as soon as he thought his danger was over, determined to break the engagements of that treaty, and called again upon the pope for protection. The barons then made an offer of the kingdom to Prince Louis, son of the king of

France, who came over with an army, and gained possession of some towns. But the barons soon repented of the step they had taken, and wished the young Frenchman back again. The death of John, which soon after happened, and was occasioned by vexation of mind, freed them and the nation from their fears of a foreign yoke. He died in the forty-ninth year of his age, and eighteenth of his reign. It is evident, from the accounts of this king, given in our larger histories, that he has not been condemned by posterity without reason. He was certainly weak, foolish, treacherous, tyrannical, and cruel.



HENRY III.

SURNAMED OF WINCHESTER.

Born, 1207. Began to reign, 1216.

Reigned 56 years, 1 month. Died, 1272, aged 64.

The next in succession is HENRY THE THIRD,
Who seldom regarded his oath or his word ;
The sums he exacted he lavishly spent,
And shew'd his profusion wherever he went.
His barons, at length, were in battle array'd,
And Henry, near Lewes, a prisoner was made ;
But peace was restored, after Leicester was slain,
And war raged no more to the end of the reign.

And now comes *a minority* ; the reign of
one *under age*. This king was only nine
years old, when John, his father, died. It be-

came needful, therefore, to appoint a governor for the prince, as well as for the people, and the Earl of Pembroke was chosen for that purpose. Under him, the French were soon defeated and driven from the kingdom; and their young Prince Louis was obliged to abandon all hopes of the English crown. The wisdom and valour of the Regent maintained something like safety and order in the state; but, at his death, or soon after, the affairs of the nation fell into a deplorable state. The French, the clergy, and the barons, were all striving for mastery; and, when Henry took the government into his own hands, it became evident that he was altogether incompetent to rule amongst them. His extravagance and folly brought him into the most perilous difficulties; whilst he had no counsellors of principles or prudence sufficient to direct him. Civil wars broke out; and the king himself, on one occasion, was taken prisoner. Towards the close of his reign, Prince Edward, Henry's son, began to shew signs of superior capacity and valour. He assembled forces, and defeated the rebels

at Evesham ; and, by his authority and address, the government was in a great measure restored. Unhappily, Edward left England for the Holy Land, about this time ; and then disturbances spread abroad, as before. The king, grown old and feeble, desired and implored ardently his gallant son to return ; but, before Edward could do this, Henry sank into the grave, after a long, troubled, and inglorious reign of fifty-six years.

The grand misfortune of this king was his total incapacity and weakness of mind ; to this the great calamities of his reign are to be attributed, rather than to any ill purposes of his. The chief events of his reign were occasioned by those about him, who ruled, or misruled, for him. Amongst those events was one, which, though little thought of at the time, became the foundation of the chief pillar of our constitution. The Earl of Leicester, himself a very indifferent statesman, was the first who called upon *the people*, distinct from the higher ranks, to give their voice and opinion on public measures. He summoned two knights from every shire,

called now *county members*, to assist in parliament; and also deputies from the old towns, or boroughs. This important measure, though it brought the earl no relief from his own difficulties, became, in after-times, the saving of the country on various threatening occasions.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have now brought our story down to the year 1272, and have noticed the principal actions of England's rulers during more than two hundred years from the Conquest. There are, however, other matters connected with the Story of Britain, which we must glance at a little. We are about to enter on the reign of the renowned Edward the First; and, as his notoriety was chiefly occasioned by affairs with Scotland, this is the place to say another word or two respecting that kingdom. There is, however, a great scarcity of information on Scottish events before the thirteenth century; and one reason of this is, that our Edward, for certain purposes to be explained, destroyed all the national

records of that people which he could find. However, some things we do know ; there was a king of Scotland, in the twelfth century, whom we have before mentioned as assisting Matilda against Stephen, and also aiding Henry II. in his efforts for the throne : I mean David I. He appears to have been a sort of Alfred in his dominions, whether we regard him as a man, a warrior, or a legislator. He had considerable possessions in England, where he owned nearly as much territory as the king of England. He was succeeded by various kings, of whom we know little of importance, except that they became connected with the royal line of England by marriage, and that, upon the death of Alexander III., in the reign of our Edward I., the succession to the crown was disputed by several candidates, amongst whom the two most celebrated were Robert Bruce and John Baliol. It was then that the great transactions between England and Scotland commenced, which led at length to the union of the two crowns.

And, now we may ask again, were there

any, and who were they, besides rulers and warriors, who distinguished themselves during that period of two hundred years? We have the names of some, and they were chiefly ecclesiastics, who alone had learning, and that sort of intelligence which enlightens and liberates the mind, so that it can perceive and seek other things than those which concern self-interest. During the worst of these times, there was still quiet in the monasteries, which afforded the means of study to those who desired it. Many learned and diligent men sought and employed these advantages, and chiefly occupied their hours as *historians*. We have only space for the names of a few, to whom we are principally indebted for the materials of our narrative. Asserius, Bishop of Salisbury, wrote of British affairs up to his own time. Marianus Scotus produced a history of the world to the year 1086. Ingulphus wrote a portion of our history, and lived in the two first Norman reigns. William of Malmsbury wrote the Saxon history; and on this we rely much. Geoffrey of Monmouth is

famous for a work on British history, which goes back a thousand years before Christ; but it is thought that the whole of his production is a fable : he lived in the time of King Stephen. Roger Hoveden lived in the time of Richard I., and is reckoned an historian of high credit.

But the most eminent and interesting of all the learned men of those times was Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar, who lived in the reign of Henry III. This acute, sagacious, and industrious inquirer went far beyond ancient philosophers in his researches and discoveries. He did not take things upon trust, but examined nature deeply for himself, and brought to light many principles which had before lain hidden. He did not confine himself to one or two subjects, but made every known science his own—*theology*, *mathematics*, *physics*, *optics*, *geography*, *astronomy*, *chronology*, *chemistry*, *medicine*, *logic*, *metaphysics*, *ethics*, and *magic* ! He wrote many treatises on those subjects, and spent years of his life, and great sums of money, in his studies and experiments. But,

being too learned for the age, he was persecuted by the ignorant and jealous monks around him; and was in danger of suffering as a magician, on account of his performances. It is pretty clear that he understood the nature and use of lenses, or magnifying glasses; and that he was not ignorant of chemical mixtures of the nature of gunpowder. He died at Oxford, at nearly eighty years of age.

Architecture also began to be studied and practised to a considerable extent under the Norman kings, who, with their barons, were continually erecting castles, or founding churches and monasteries. But here again ecclesiastics were the only persons who had the requisite knowledge to construct buildings of strength or beauty. The Tower of London, the old but not the first, St. Paul's Cathedral, a bridge over the Thames, and numberless religious and military buildings, were erected in the reign of the Conqueror. William Rufus caused the original Westminster Hall to be built, a fabric of great extent and splendour. Henry I. rebuilt

Windsor Castle. In the reigns of Henry II., Richard I. and John, London Bridge was first built of stone. After standing upwards of six hundred years, it has just been taken down.

As to the state of the English people generally, it had not much changed since the Conquest. Great barons and ecclesiastics, military tenants of the castle domains, Jew merchants, foreign artificers, and the depressed cultivators of the soil, were the chief orders of men. As yet there were no middle classes; no ranks of independent men, without title, subsisting on commerce, the arts, or reserved property, as at present; though there were a few merchants. Shops were scarcely used. Goods were bought and sold at public markets, or fairs; and there were few traders, as such. *Surnames* were little known till the time of the Normans. Men used to be called by one name, as Edwin, Penda, Harold, K'nute. The names Robert, William, Richard, Henry, were introduced by the Normans; and for a long time even these were used singly by the lower orders.

At length, the different possessions, professions, and employments, of men gave them descriptive names, which in time became hereditary in families; thus Grantham, Ely, Preston, Monk, Clerk, Abbot, Palmer, that is, pilgrim, and Franklin, or Freeman. There were also surnames which refer to employments long gone by, as Falconer, Archer, Bowyer, Stringer, and Fletcher. But our most common names evidently arose from the handicraft employments of men, as Smith, Taylor, Cooper, Mason, and so on.

I have said that the English language continued to be spoken, notwithstanding the efforts of the Normans to force their own dialect upon the people. But so different was the English of seven hundred years ago from our modern speech, that I question whether my readers could understand it. I will give them a few short specimens at different periods. They contain the first few words of the Lord's Prayer :—

In the year 700.—“ Uren Fader thic arth in heofnas, sic gehalgud thin noma ; so cymeth thin ric.”

The year 900.—“Thu ure Fader, the eart on heofenum,
si thin nama gehalgod; cuma thin rice.”

The year 1160.

“Ure Fader in heaven rich
Thy name be hayled ever lich,
Thou bring us thy michell blisse
Als hit in heaven y-doe
Evar in yearth beene it also.”

The year 1460.—“Our Fadir that art in hevenes, hale-
weid be thi name; thi kingdome come to thee, be thi will
don in eerthe as in hevene.”

A sort of history of the English tongue
was written as spoken in the year 1385,
from which a few lines may amuse our ju-
venile students.

“As it is knowe, how meny maner peple beeth in this
lond; there beeth also so meny dyvers longages, and tonges.
Notheles Walsche men and Scots, that beeth nought medled
with other nations, holdeth wel nye his first longage and
speche,” etc.

We must now proceed with our history.



EDWARD I.

SURNAMED LONGSHANKS.

Born, 1239. Began to reign, 1272.

Reigned 34 years, 7 months, 21 days. Died, 1307, aged 69.

EDWARD, called *Longshanks*, from all that we hear,
Was very successful, but very severe ;
In Wales and in Scotland his terrors he spread,
And the blood of their poets and warriors he shed,
In London alone, of the Jews, as they say,
Two hundred and eighty he hang'd in one day ;
But this as an act of stern justice was done ;
And a prince the Welsh found on the birth of his son.

This young prince, though in Palestine at the time of his father's death, was duly proclaimed in England ; and his authority was

cheerfully acknowledged by the people, who had a high opinion of his valour and abilities. Knowing that his crown was in no danger, he did not hurry his return, but continued abroad more than a year. Soon after his arrival, he made a grand entertainment for his lords and others. At the banquet I should think there was meat enough ; for I find an account preserved of 278 bacon hogs, 440 oxen, 430 sheep, 22,600 hens, and 13 fat goats ! At this coronation, 500 young horses were turned loose, to be the property of any who could catch them.

The ability and vigour of Edward's government soon became evident in the altered state of society. The laws began to be respected ; and the lawless found themselves restrained and punished. Edward thought himself at liberty, however, to plunder and destroy, on certain occasions, to a dreadful extent ; and the Jews, then, as now, the great money-dealers, were deprived of their property, and almost exterminated, at the commencement of this reign.

Edward was a martial prince, and could

not long be easy in a state of peace. His first expedition was against the Welsh, whom he defeated ; and, on a subsequent occasion, he made a total conquest of their country, put to death their king, Llewellyn, as a common malefactor, and made his own infant son Prince of Wales. From this time, the eldest son of the King of England has borne the same title.

We have already noticed the contentions for the crown of Scotland. Edward's success in Wales had greatly encouraged him to hope that Scotland might also fall into his hands, even before he was called in by the barons of that kingdom to decide their quarrel. When they had made their appeal to him, they were thunderstruck on finding that Edward, who repaired to Scotland with an army, *claimed a right* of judging as their liege lord. He brought extracts from old monkish historians, to prove that Scotland had formerly been in subjection to England; and that its monarchs had done homage for their dominions. Weak and despicable as this argument was, he urged it so powerfully,

that Bruce and Baliol, the two grand competitors, assented to his pretensions; and such was the distracted state of the country that its chief lords found themselves unable to resist this strange course of events. Edward then appointed persons to inquire into the merits of the question, and promised to give his decision in the next year. In the mean time he required the great fortresses of Scotland to be put into his hands, to enable him, as he pretended, to give the true heir possession of the crown! At length, Edward decided for Baliol, and allowed him to put on a dependent crown.

It was soon seen, however, that the ambitious king of England intended nothing less than the entire subjugation of Scotland to his own sceptre. He purposely provoked Baliol, by various indignities, to revolt from him; and he would have made this an excuse for leading an army into the country, had he not been hindered by a war with France, occasioned, at first, by a paltry quarrel about some spring water between the crews of some ships of the different nations.

Edward's present and intended wars gave occasion for many tyrannical exactions of money, and consequent disputes with the clergy, barons, and others. He was even compelled to listen to their complaints, and granted new charters for their security. His foreign contentions made it necessary that he should maintain peace at home ; and the Scots seized the opportunity to prepare for their own defence. The most renowned of the Scottish patriots, at this time, was Sir William Wallace, whose zeal and courage prompted him to undertake the deliverance of his country. Bruce had joined the English, and Baliol had been taken prisoner. Wallace, therefore, gathered an army about him, and gave battle to the Earl of Warrene, Edward's general in Scotland, and defeated him with great loss.

But the king of England, having concluded a peace with France, determined to make a grand effort himself upon Scotland, and led an army of a hundred thousand men into that country. Wallace had resigned the command to certain chiefs, who had become jealous of

his power; and only headed himself a few followers, who would obey no other leader. Edward engaged the Scottish army at Falkirk, and gained a complete victory. Wallace retired with his company; and, after a while, persuaded Bruce to leave the disgraceful service of Edward to defend his own rights and those of his country against the aggressor. We cannot relate the history of the various battles and disastrous defeats of the Scots: in the sequel, the brave Wallace was betrayed into the power of Edward, who made one of the greatest patriots of history die the death of a traitor. Bruce, the grandson of him who had first contended for the crown, then took the lead of the Scottish armies, and was crowned king. He was, however, wofully worsted in another battle; and the liberties of Scotland would most likely have fallen for ever, had not Edward, who was assembling a new army for the utter destruction of those whom he considered his incorrigible enemies, sickened and died at Carlisle, enjoining, with his last breath, his son Edward to accomplish that

dreadful purpose. Thus Edward, the most prudent and powerful monarch of his age died without attaining his object, though victorious in almost every battle.

His character strongly partook of the fierceness and barbarity of the age. Yet, as a civil governor, his merits were very great, and have gained him more applause from succeeding ages than his most brilliant military exploits.



EDWARD II.

SURNAMED OF CAERNARVOŃ.

Born, 1284. Began his reign, 1307.

*Reigned 19 years, 6 months, 18 days. Deposed and murdered,
1327, aged 44.*

King EDWARD THE SECOND, *Caernarvon* surnamed,
Was chiefly for follies and sufferings famed.
His fav'rites his time and affections engross'd,
Till his queen proved untrue, and his sceptre was lost.
Deposed and despised, to the Tower he went,
And from prison to prison was afterwards sent ;
There, at leisure, he mourn'd over scenes that were past,
And by ruffians was cruelly murder'd at last.

The reign of Edward II., his son and successor, will not detain us long. His actions and character were not of a sort to tempt his-

torians to enlarge upon them. Robert Bruce took early advantage of the first Edward's death, and, assembling an army, prepared to assert his rights once more. In the mean time, young Edward, instead of obeying his father's injunctions, disbanded his troops; and thereby convinced all who were competent to judge that he was quite unable to sway the sceptre with effect. He yielded himself up to the management of Gaveston and other favourites, until the barons, resenting the preference which they conceived to be injurious to themselves, obliged the king to banish Gaveston and to confirm their privileges. The favourite, however, was soon recalled, and became more insolent than ever, until the barons, rising in arms, took him prisoner, and cut off his head.

In the year 1314, the Scots, under Bruce, assembled a force of 30,000 men, against whom Edward marched with not fewer than 100,000, as historians affirm. At Bannockburn near Stirling, that memorable battle was fought, in which the English suffered the greatest overthrow they had experienced

since the battle of Hastings. To the distance of one hundred miles they were chased by the victorious Scots, with vast slaughter; Edward himself escaping with great difficulty. He learned no wisdom from his misfortunes, but gave himself up to the direction of new favourites. His queen also had her partisans, and became her husband's chief enemy. At last, she forced him to resign his crown in favour of his son; soon after which, the wretched monarch was barbarously murdered by ruffians, supposed to have been employed expressly by herself. The reign of this king was so mean, and his end so shocking, that there can be no satisfaction in drawing his character, or inflicting censure, which the narrative itself sufficiently conveys. His greatest misfortune was his possession of a crown, which, in the end, brought all his calamities upon him. Had he possessed no power, he would not have been called to atone with his life for its abuse. He died in the twentieth year of his reign, in the year 1327.



EDWARD III.

SURNAMED OF WINDSOR.

Born, 1312. Began to reign, 1327.

Reigned 50 years, 5 months. Died 1377, aged 65.

FOR EDWARD THE THIRD, as historians relate,
The love and respect of his subjects were great.
In France and in Scotland most bravely he fought,
And their monarchs as pris'ners to England he brought.
He built Windsor Castle; and, writers have stated,
The Knights of the Garter by him were created.
To science and merit his name was endear'd;
And now the Reformer, John Wickliffe, appear'd.

This prince has a great name in our history, and seemed to be his grandfather revived. He was at first kept under the control

of his mother, who wished to retain the regal power in her own hands; but he soon set himself at liberty. Her favourite, Mortimer, was publicly executed for his crimes; and the queen herself was imprisoned during the remainder of her life.

She was sister to the King of France, upon whose decease the crown of that kingdom had become a disputed right, as that of Scotland had formerly been. One of the claimants was Edward III., who founded his pretensions upon an assumed right of his mother, as daughter of the deceased monarch, in preference to the collateral branches of the royal line. Thus began the great continental wars, in which our ancestors were so long engaged. But the contest with Scotland first demanded the attention of the young king. This he prosecuted with glory to his arms, but without obtaining the satisfaction of subduing that kingdom. The crown of France being a far more splendid prize, he, soon after, mustered his whole strength for that object. His first expeditions accomplished nothing, being insufficient for the en-

terprise. At length, he fought Philip of France at the village of Crecy, which is rendered conspicuous in history by this event. Here Edward displayed those grand military abilities, which were more than equal to a host of enemies. He was attended, too, by his son, called the Black Prince, then quite a youth, but full of spirit for the occasion. The French were routed with dreadful slaughter, though their army was nearly three times as numerous as that of the English. Indeed, their loss far exceeded in numbers the whole amount of the English army ; while the English scarcely lost a hundred men.

This battle did not obtain for Edward the crown of France ; nor was he so absurd as to expect it. But it gained him a footing in that country ; and the town of Calais, which he took, after a twelvemonth's siege, afforded him means of entrance at other times.

During these transactions, the Scots thought the time favourable for them to be busy ; and David, their king, invaded England with fifty thousand men. But Edward's queen, Philippa, took upon herself to provide

for the occasion. She led an army to the north, which defeated the Scots, and took their king prisoner ; and he was shut up by her in the Tower of London.

The next memorable military exploit of this reign was the battle of Poitiers, fought between the Black Prince and the French king, John. This was even a more surprising action than that of Crecy. The prince had not more than twelve thousand men, with which he penetrated into the heart of France, and was at length surrounded by nearly all the difficulties and dangers which might have been expected. But he and his brave little army gained a complete victory, took the French monarch prisoner, and brought him to London, where he was treated with the greatest generosity by the Prince. Thus Edward had the satisfaction of detaining two kings captive at once.

But all these glories purchased no real good for England or her king. The illustrious Black Prince died of consumption, in Spain ; and Edward's fortunes gradually declined. He died, dispirited, and almost obscure, in

the year 1377, in the sixty-fifth of his age, and fifty-first of his reign.

In this reign, the woollen manufacture was first established in England; and John Wickliffe began to preach against the errors of Popery. His followers were called *Wickliffites* and *Lollards*.



RICHARD II.

SURNAMED OF BORDEAUX.

*Born, 1366. Began to reign, 1377.
Reigned 22 years, 3 months, 8 days. Deposed, 1399;
and murdered, 1400, aged 34.*

KING RICHARD THE SECOND, as we have been told,
Ascended the throne when eleven years old.
Wat Tyler's rebellion he soon overthrew ;
Yet he proved himself weak and impolitic too.
His barons took arms and resisted his power,
And forced him to seek a retreat in the Tower.
His crown he resign'd, but resign'd it in vain,
For at Pontefract Castle poor Richard was slain.

**Richard was son of the Black Prince, and
came to the crown when only eleven years**

old. Whilst he was a minor, the French, thinking it a good time to retaliate the injuries they had suffered, infested our southern shores, burning Portsmouth and other places, whilst the Scots ravaged the northern borders. But the most formidable danger was a rebellion in the heart of England, occasioned by a tax on individuals, called a *poll tax*. The insurgents, one hundred thousand in number, under Wat Tyler, or *Walter the Tyler*, marched to London, where they committed the most dreadful excesses; killing the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chancellor, and many other distinguished personages. But the young king had the courage to go out and meet the rebels; and the lord mayor of London had the farther courage to knock Tyler down with a blow of his mace; when an alderman, riding up, thrust the rebel through the body with his dagger. The mob prepared to avenge the death of their leader, when Richard, with admirable presence of mind, offered himself as their captain, and promised them all that they required.

I am sorry to say, that I have related all of this king's conduct which is entitled to any praise. His subsequent acts were only deeds of tyranny and folly. Amongst these, the most absurd and disastrous to himself was his banishment of his cousin, Henry, Duke of Hereford, who was descended from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, one of the sons of Edward III. Whilst Richard was absent in Ireland, this Henry, who, by his father's death, had become Duke of Lancaster, landed in Yorkshire, where he was joined by Percy, Earl of Northumberland, with sixty thousand men. Richard was soon deprived of his crown, and, some time after, perished by violence in the year 1400. This event led to the famous contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, which brought civil war with all its attendant miseries into the kingdom.



HENRY IV.

OF LANCASTER, SURNAMED BOLINGBROKE.

Born, 1367. Began to reign, 1399.

Reigned 13 years, 5 months, 20 days. Died, 1413, aged 46.

When RICHARD THE SECOND to prison was'driven,
To Lancaster's Duke the dominion was given ;
But scarcely had HENRY been solemnly crown'd,
When plots and rebellions began to abound :
By vigour and promptitude these were suppress'd,
And many abuses were partly redress'd.
In this reign, the first blood of the Lollards was spilt,
Famed Whittington lived, and Guildhall was rebuilt.

The Duke of Lancaster soon found that those who had helped him to depose the former king were not likely to be the most obe-

dient subjects to the new one. Many insurrections, headed by the chief nobles, occurred; but the king suppressed them with great ability. He also subdued the Welsh, who, under Owen Glendower, rose against him. In time, he got the better of all opposition, and persuaded the Parliament to make his bad title a good one by an act in his favour.

In this reign, English commerce greatly increased, and merchant ships of large size were sent out. With regard to liberty, Henry IV. granted something to the commons, by which they were much benefited. Learning was here, as indeed it was all over Europe, in a very low condition: lower than it had been two hundred years before. Bishops, when obliged by their office to perform certain acts, were often compelled to adopt such methods as the following:—"As I cannot read myself, A. B. hath suscribed for me;" or, "As my lord bishop cannot write himself, at his request I have subscribed!"

The Lollards, or followers of Wickliffe,

were very numerous at this time; we may say that they were the first Protestants in England, and were persecuted with the greatest severity. They were not by this suppressed; but the time was not come for the great change in religion. Henry expired at Westminster, in the year 1413, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and thirteenth of his reign. He possessed considerable abilities, but employed them for unjust purposes. He was a man of violence, and was looked upon as such by his subjects.



HENRY V.

SURNAMED OF MONMOUTH.

Born, 1388. Began to reign, 1413.

Reigned 9 years, 5 months, 11 days. Died, 1422, aged 34.

Famed HENRY THE FIFTH next ascended the throne ;
And soon by the French was his bravery known.
Though sick and fatigued, and in numbers but few,
His troops were enabled the foe to subdue
On Azincourt's field, which will long live in story,
For there English soldiers were cover'd with glory.
Fresh conquests succeeded ; but Henry's career
Was cut short by grim Death, in his thirty-fourth year.

Henri V., son of the last king, had, while Prince of Wales, led a dissolute life. He af-

fronted a judge on the bench, who immediately committed him to prison. But, on coming to the crown, Henry shewed the most encouraging change, and discarded his profligate companions.

His head was soon full of projects, like those of Edward III. and the Black Prince, for the acquisition of the crown of France. Taking advantage of the insanity of the French king, and the troubles in which the country was involved, he made certain demands of territory, which being refused, he went over with an army of fifty thousand men, in August, 1415, and marched up the country : but his army, greatly reduced by disease and fatigue, was returning towards Calais, when the French forces overtook him near the village or castle of Azincourt. His enemies were now four to one against him; and his destruction seemed inevitable. But the surprising fortune of the English arms attended him. He gained a complete victory over his impetuous and overwhelming enemy. Afterwards, uniting himself with the powerful Duke of Burgundy, and

marrying Catherine, the French king's daughter, he was made Regent of the kingdom during the lifetime of Charles, and was declared heir to the crown after that monarch's death. But Henry was removed from these brilliant prospects by his own death, which unexpectedly happened in the thirty-fourth year of his age, 1422.



HENRY VI.

SURNAMED OF WINDSOR.

Born, 1421. Began to reign, 1422.

Reigned 38 years, 5 months, 4 days. Deposed, 1461.

Died, 1471, aged 50.

Of splendour unconscious, to govern unable,
King HENRY THE SIXTH was a babe in his cradle.
In London and Paris they crown'd this poor child,
Who, when he grew up, proved meek, merciful, mild ;
But weak were his measures, and feeble his sway—
France was lost, and the English refused to obey ;
Civil war soon blazed out, plots on plots were disclosed,
Edward triumph'd in arms, and the King was deposed.

Henry VI. was only nine months old when his father's death made him king. He was,

therefore, no great object of fear, although the English crown at that time had wider dominion than ever. The Duke of Bedford, his uncle, was appointed guardian of the infant, and protector of England, an office which he executed with great reputation and ability. He carried on the wars in France with success, until he was checked by the surprising conduct of an enterprising female, called *Joan of Arc*, or the *Maid of Orleans*. This rustic girl, a servant at a small inn, pondered on the state of her country, now under the English yoke, and was seized with a wild desire of delivering her sovereign from his enemies. More particularly, she fancied that she was destined to relieve the city of Orleans, which was besieged and reduced to great distress by the English. In an age of superstition, it will excite no wonder if she was thought to be inspired, and imagined herself to be so. The wonderful result of her efforts would almost favour that opinion. She promised the French king that Orleans should be liberated and restored to him ; and that he himself should be solemnly crowned

at Rheims; an event then as apparently improbable as any imaginable change in human affairs : for Rheims was then in the possession of the English, who were in great force in all the surrounding districts. We cannot pursue the particulars of the story : suffice it to say that both her promises were fulfilled; and more than this, the French, taking fresh courage, turned their arms strenuously against their invaders; though not before the latter had captured the unfortunate Joan, and condemned her to be burned alive as a witch. I am sorry to say, that Englishmen were the persons who were guilty of this barbarity. They, however, gained nothing by their wickedness; for they gradually lost all the fruits of the splendid victories which they had gained in France.

Henry, before he reached the age of manhood, discovered indisputable evidences of weakness and incapacity; and, being at the same time in possession of a disputed crown, it is no wonder that his reign was full of dangers and calamities. The Duke of York asserted his right to the crown; and his claim

seems to have been the best of the two ; for he was descended from the third son of Edward III., whilst Henry, of the House of Lancaster, was descended from the fourth. Each family had a sign, or emblem, by which it was distinguished : that of York being a white rose, whilst Lancaster had the red. Hence the troubles which ensued are called *the Wars of the Roses*.

The battles which took place on this question were many and sanguinary. It is said that one hundred thousand Englishmen fell in the contest. King Henry was defeated and taken prisoner, first at St. Alban's, when a truce was agreed to, but soon broken. He was again vanquished at Southampton, by the Earl of Warwick, called the *king-maker*, on account of his wonderful influence both in the field and the council. Henry's queen afterwards gained a victory over the Yorkists at Wakefield, and the Duke was slain. His son young Edward, however, took up the quarrel ; and eventually, Henry, after being deposed and restored several times, was confined in the Tower, and there, as it is gene-

rally believed, he was murdered, in the fiftieth year of his age, by the Duke of Gloucester, of whom we shall hear more soon.

It is difficult to fix the length of this reign; since it was frequently interrupted by the rule of Edward, who was alternately proclaimed king and rebel. We may say, however, that it was about thirty-nine years that Henry had the misfortune to possess, in some way, the crown.



EDWARD IV.

OF YORK.

Born, 1443. Began to reign, 1461.

Reigned 22 years, 1 month, 5 days. Died 1483, aged 41.

In EDWARD THE FOURTH, a stern prince you behold,
Of whom many terrible tales have been told.
In the field he was brave, but tyrannic at best,
And cruelty held its dire reign in his breast.
His legalized murders in hist'ry look black ;
His brother he drown'd in a butt of sweet sack ;
For an innocent jest, he would chop off a head,
And terror prevailed till the tyrant was dead.

Edward IV. was proclaimed King in London, in 1461, eleven years before Henry's death, and had to continue fighting for his

precarious crown. The event of the battle sometimes went against him, and replaced Henry for a short time on the throne, through the exertions of his queen, Margaret. It was not till the death of that unfortunate monarch, that Edward considered himself at leisure for other matters, and turned his thoughts towards France; but, although he went over with an army, nothing followed but a treaty with the French king.

There is little in the remaining acts of this sovereign that requires our notice. The early part of his reign exhibits only raging wars and desperate cruelties; and, afterwards, we find Edward's character not less marked with vices. He died rather unexpectedly, in the forty-second year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign, leaving two sons, the eldest of whom was only in his thirteenth year.



EDWARD V.

Born, 1470. Began to reign, 1483.

Reigned nominally 2 months, 13 days. Smothered, 1483, aged 13.

Young EDWARD THE FIFTH was a king but in name,
As Richard, regardless of sin and of shame,
Both him and his brother deprived of their right,
And caused the poor boys to be smother'd one night.
In a chest, at the foot of a staircase, they lay,
Till a hundred and ninety-one years roll'd away;
Then to Westminster Abbey their bones were removed,
As the lines on their monument are said to have proved.

Edward the Fifth, and his brother the Duke of York, were put under the protection of their uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Although young Edward was the true suc-

cessor to the crown at his father's death, his life was so short, that his reign scarcely appears in our history. Richard found reasons for setting him aside ; and, soon after, as the story goes, caused him and his youthful brother to be murdered in the Tower. By this act, the Duke of Gloucester at once stepped up to the throne, under the title of Richard III.

As we draw near to our own times, the history of war and politics becomes too much for our little volume ; especially as we must find room for general observations on the people, and the great changes to which they were subjected by some events. We must, therefore, content ourselves, in future, with merely announcing the sovereigns and their chief acts, that we may have opportunity to attend a little to the other interesting concerns of the nation at large, which form to us the most important portion of the Story of Britain.



RICHARD III.

SURNAMED CROOKBACK.

Born, 1450. Began to reign, 1483.

Reigned 2 years, 2 months. Killed in battle, 1485, aged 35.

The monarch called *Crookback*, or RICHARD THE THIRD,
Of whom many tragical stories you've heard,
Was sullen, reserved, cruel, treach'rous, and base,
To England a scourge, and a stain to her race.
Detested he lived, unlamented he died,
For though brave, he possess'd not a virtue beside ;
By Richmond, at Bosworth, the tyrant was slain,
In his thirty-fifth year, and the third of his reign.

Richard III., called *Crook-back*, as it is said, on account of his personal deformity, did not long enjoy the honours which he had

purchased by his crimes. A competitor soon arose in the person of Henry, Earl of Richmond ; a nobleman very remotely connected with the house of Lancaster. In fact, his title was the very worst of all the pretensions of those who had aspired to the kingdom. But, Richard being abhorred, and there being no one besides ready to take arms to oppose him, Henry of Richmond urged his claim with a success equal to his resolution. He obtained assistance from France, and landed on the coast of Wales with a small army amounting only to two thousand men : but he was soon joined by a considerable number of the English. Richard, who was not destitute of spirit and courage, assembled his forces as quickly as possible ; but, though they were double the number of Henry's, they were entirely defeated, and Richard was slain. This was at the celebrated battle of Bosworth, the last that took place between the rival houses of the Red and White Roses. And thus the crown came to Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, thence forward called Henry VII.



HENRY VII.

SURNAMED TUDOR.

Born, 1455. Began to reign, 1485.

Reigned 23 years, 8 months. Died, 1509, aged 52.

IN HENRY THE SEVENTH and his consort we find
The houses of York and of Lancaster join'd ;
And though two pretenders laid claim to the crown,
Both Simnel and Warbeck were shortly put down.
The king loved his money ; yet he rear'd, for his fame,
The beautiful Chapel which still bears his name ;
In his reign, the West Indies were likewise found out ;
And at Richmond, in Surrey, he died of the gout.

We have now arrived at another important
turn in our history, and shall notice a few
general particulars at the end of his reign.

Henry soon shewed his careful wisdom by marrying Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV. By this politic measure he united the claims of both houses in himself, and put to silence all disputes on that head. But all his sagacity and caution could not preserve him from much annoyance, arising from two mere pretenders, Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck : the first of whom personated the Earl of Warwick ; whilst the last gave out that he was the Duke of York, brother to Edward V. The imposture agitated the country for some years ; but, at length, the pretenders fell into the king's hands : to Simnel was assigned a mean employment in the monarch's service ; and Warbeck, detected in an attempt to escape from the Tower, was put to death as a traitor.

Henry VII. had a son, named Arthur, who died young ; also a son, named Henry, who succeeded him ; and a daughter, named Margaret, who was married to James IV. of Scotland. We must bear this in mind.

King Henry died in the year 1509, being the fifty-second of his age, and twenty-fourth

of his reign. His greediness of money was so excessive, that at his death he was worth nearly £1,800,000, which is equal to five millions at present.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The people of England made some gradual advances in civilization, even during the fierce and distracting wars in which their rulers engaged them. The transactions with the continent brought over foreign arts and improvements; and it was seen that the English were not only apt to learn, but likely enough to become teachers in their turn.

But it was not until men obtained personal liberty, and security for their property, that the genius of the people shewed itself fully. While every one not noble was a slave, while peasants were sold with the land they cultivated, while even the gentry were under subordination to the great domineering barons, there was no encouragement to study

improving arts, or to labour for any thing beyond the present occasion. For ages, the dwellers in cities were in no better condition; but, at length, those societies of men obtained from the kings charters of privileges, which gave them a sort of government of their own, and protected them from the tyranny of the haughty barons. We have seen that cities, or borough-towns, were called upon to send persons to assist in parliament; and thus the people began to have a hand in making their own laws.

But the reign of Henry VII. we ought always to remember as the period in which the main body of the people rose from bondage and obscurity into power and consideration. This king, in order to increase his own authority, destroyed that of the barons, and deprived them of their ancient dominion over their tenants. Men thus released from their lords began to look to themselves, their rights and interests, and means of life. Being no longer maintained in idle bondage by their superiors, they turned to pursuits of ingenious industry; they became handicraftsmen,

artizans, traders, merchants. Thus new commodities were brought under the notice of the rich and great, who, instead of rivalling each other in the number of their retainers, acquired a more useful sort of ambition, at least to the community, and endeavoured to excel in the splendour and elegance of their houses and tables. Henry allowed nobles to sell and peasants to buy estates, if the parties were willing and able ; and thus a wholesome ambition in the lower orders was cherished, whereby they were placed in a rising condition.

The fact was, that Henry VII. was more fond of money himself than of any other thing that could be named ; and, by encouraging trade and industry, he provided sources from which his own revenues could be supplied. His treasury, at his death, proved that he had calculated truly ; though it also bore witness to the cruel exactions by which property had been extorted from its rightful owners.

The caution of Henry VII. was misplaced and unfortunate in one memorable instance.

Christopher Colon, otherwise Columbus, laid before him a scheme for the discovery of a Western continent, and offered all the advantages of it to the king, if he would furnish him with vessels and an equipment for the voyage. Henry declined hazard-ing money in what he conceived to be a wild project. Columbus obtained the ships from Spain ; and Spain was repaid by the riches of America, which Columbus discovered.

From the time of Edward I. to that of Henry VII., the beautiful sort of pointed architecture, commonly called Gothic, was practised and brought to its perfection. Most of our present old cathedrals and parish churches were then built ; and they give evident proofs of the science and taste of their architects, as well as of the wealth and munificence of their founders.

The great invention of this period was the art of printing, which, in the middle of the fifteenth century, began to make a noise in Germany, and was first practised here by William Caxton, in the reign of Edward IV.

Caxton died seven years after Henry VII. came to the crown.

We must now go on with our history, and notice the reign of Henry VIII.



HENRY VIII.

Born, 1492. Began to reign, 1509.

Reigned 37 years, 9 months, 7 days. Died, 1547, aged 56.

Now comes the Eighth HENRY, in royal array,
 The *Bluebeard* of England, historians say;
 Who, by passion incited, or jealousy led,
 Thought nothing of short'ning his wives by a head.
 Divorces and murders astonish'd the nation;
 The monks lost their cash in the new Reformation;
 Great Cardinal Wolsey was left in the lurch,
 And the king lived and died "Supreme Head of the Church."

This prince ascended the throne in 1509,
 at the age of eighteen, and began his course
 with promising appearances. He, however,

soon spent the vast treasures of his father with a foolish profusion. His vanity engaged him too much with the affairs of the continent, and his flatterers encouraged him to make preparations for the conquest of France. These and other projects led him into unmeasured expense. Whilst involved in a war with France, his general, the Earl of Surrey, defeated and killed James IV. of Scotland, who had invaded England. Henry's conduct in his great measures was at this time directed by the famous Cardinal Wolsey. This person was the son of a butcher at Ipswich; but, having had a learned education, and possessing excellent abilities, he rose, as Becket had risen before him, to the highest honours and powers of the state: but these were not sufficient to satisfy his ambition; for he aimed at nothing less than the popedom.

We have mentioned that Wickliffe had, long before, ventured to expose some of the errors of popery. His doctrines, though repressed, were not extinguished in the minds of men, and there were many in England, in

the reign of Henry VIII., who secretly favoured them. In the mean time, Luther, in Germany, publicly and strenuously opposed the grand Romish doctrines, till, at length, several princes declared in his favour, and THE REFORMATION was carried forward under their auspices. The Emperor, however, upheld the cause of popery, and issued a decree enjoining the princes to restore the old doctrines and forms of worship in their territories. Against this the reformers entered a solemn *protest*; and hence the name of PROTESTANT began to be applied to those who professed the Reformed Religion.

It is a curious fact, that Henry VIII., who was for years the great enemy of the Reformation, and the champion of the Pope, should have himself overthrown the papal domination in England. About the year 1521, Henry wrote a book against Luther; and the Pope, in return, gave him the title of *Defender of the Faith*, which his successors have retained. But the Pope soon found Henry to be a sorry defender; or, rather, he proved to be an enemy more to be

dreaded than Luther. The Pope, having refused his consent that the King of England should divorce his wife Catherine of Arragon, to contract a fresh marriage with Anne Bullen, the haughty and impatient monarch resolved to throw off the authority of the Romish Church. He also disgraced Wolsey for opposing his wishes, and made Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury in his stead.

But Henry had something else in view. His treasury being exhausted, money became necessary, and he resolved to seize the vast revenues of the monasteries and other religious houses in England, to the number of six hundred and forty-five. This was one of the most surprising exertions of despotic power recorded in English history ; such as at some periods would have involved the nation in domestic strife and foreign wars : but Henry happened to hit the prevailing passion of his subjects, which just then was for destroying ecclesiastical authority and rights. The King then declared *himself* head of the church, instead of the Pope, and drew up a form of belief which all his people

were required to embrace ; and most severely did they suffer, who did not conform to his mandate.

The conduct of this king towards his wives was dreadfully tyrannical and cruel. Anne Bullen, soon disliked, was beheaded on a frivolous and false charge. The next day, Henry married Jane Seymour, who died the year after. His next wife was Anne of Cleves, whom he soon dismissed ; and then he married Catherine Howard, niece to the Duke of Norfolk, who, with some justice, was beheaded. His last wife, Catherine Parr, narrowly escaped being burned to death for her religious opinions ; a fate which she dexterously evaded by flattering her husband's foolish conceit of his infallibility in religious matters. Henry's cruelty increased with his years. Few days passed without some dreadful execution. The brave Earl of Surrey was put to death, without a crime being proved against him ; his father, the Duke of Norfolk, was to have suffered the next day, but was saved by the King's own death, which happened January 28th,

1547, in the thirty-eighth year of his reign.

Bad as we find the disposition and conduct of this king to have been, his reign is one which it is particularly important to notice and remember in the History of England. The national religion was changed ; the Bible was translated into English ; and the Church of England had then its beginning. The monasteries, being deprived of their revenues, were quickly deserted, and fell into ruin. Their beautiful remains frequently strike the eye in travelling, and equally remind us of those who, in ancient days, founded or lived within their ivied walls, and of those who accomplished their destruction in the way we have related.



EDWARD VI.

Born, 1537. Began to reign, 1547.

Reigned 6 years, 5 months, 8 days. Died, 1553, aged 16.

King EDWARD THE SIXTH, when but nine years of age,
Ascended the throne with the mind of a sage :
The Latin and French he could fluently speak,
And understood Spanish, Italian, and Greek.
He founded Christ's Hospital ; crowns he first coin'd,
And half-crowns beside, as in hist'ry we find.
He favour'd the cause of the great Reformation,
But died at sixteen, to the grief of the nation.

The son of Henry VIII. and Lady Jane Seymour, was only nine years old when his father died. His uncle, Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somer-

set, was made Protector, and, with the assistance of Cranmer, completed the reformation in religion; not, however, without several insurrections. He also marched into Scotland, and defeated the Scots with great slaughter at the battle of Pinkey, but was prevented from improving his victory by disturbances at home. At the head of those who opposed the Duke of Somerset was his own brother, the Lord Admiral; but he was beheaded at the instigation of Dudley, Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland. Some time afterwards, the Protector himself was beheaded, through the influence of the same person. Northumberland, being then in power, prevailed on young Edward to make a will, settling the crown on Lady Jane Grey, his cousin, an amiable young lady, who had acquired a surprising share of learning and accomplishments, and who, though worthy of the crown, had no desire to wear it.

The character and attainments of Edward were certainly very admirable, and he is always held up to the young as an instructive

example. But his health visibly declined, before he could shew how far his knowledge and virtue would carry him in the course of good government during a stormy period. He died of consumption, in 1553, in the seventh year of his reign, and sixteenth of his age. His latter days were embittered by the reflection that he had allowed himself to be prevailed on to sign the death-warrant of his uncle, Somerset.

The Reformation went on rapidly during this king's time, through the zeal and management of Cranmer, by whom the Church of England was established, and its services were appointed. Perhaps, some of my readers may not know that the Popish worship was always conducted in Latin, whilst the Bible was withheld from the people ; so that, in general, they could know nothing of religion but what they learned from the priests. The great benefit of the Reformation was the giving of the Scriptures to the nation, and the performance of divine worship in the common dialect of the land. As, however, very few indeed, in those days, could procure

a Bible, or read it when obtained, it was customary to have a large one chained to the desk in some of the churches, to be read aloud at any time, by those who could read, to such as chose to hear it.

Edward was succeeded by his elder sister, Mary.



MARY,
SURNAMED THE BLOODY.

*Born, 1516. Began to reign, 1553.
Reigned 5 years, 4 months, 11 days. Died, 1558, aged 42.*

In MARY, the consort of Philip, were seen
A furious bigot, a merciless queen ;
The Duke of Northumberland, Lady Jane Grey,
With her lord, to the scaffold were all led away ;
And Ridley, and Cranmer, and Latimer died
As martyrs, with hundreds of subjects beside.
But Heaven interfered bleeding England to save,
And Mary, detested, sank into her grave.

**Lady Jane Grey was indeed proclaimed,
but her reign, if such it can be called, lasted**

only a few days. She was beheaded, with her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, son of the Duke of Northumberland, who himself suffered the same kind of death. Mary, being seated on the throne, proceeded, by most dreadful acts of violence, to re-establish Popery, to which she was devotedly attached. She lighted up the fires of persecution, and burned alive those who were courageous enough to profess the reformed religion. Cranmer, the father of the English Church, was the peculiar object of resentment to the Catholics, as soon as they were restored to power. He was imprisoned and condemned to be burned; but was offered the Queen's pardon if he would turn papist again. The fear of death overcame him so far that he made a private recantation of his mode of faith; but the Queen, resolved that he should die, ordered him to acknowledge this change in public. He then candidly owned that his opinions were unchanged; and declared that he was ready to suffer the death appointed him, and that his hand, which had offended by signing his recantation, should first

perish. He, therefore, when brought to the stake, held it in the fire till it was consumed, and soon after sunk amidst the flames.

I am not sorry that our space does not allow us to give the particulars of the dreadful executions of this horrid reign. It is enough to say that two hundred and seventy-seven persons were burned alive by this Queen Mary's orders, assisted by two wretches, Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and Bonner, bishop of London, whose names with her's are worthily reserved for the detestation of mankind.

Mary married Philip, King of Spain, as furious a bigot as herself. But he soon slighted her; and she died miserably, in 1558, in the forty-third year of her age and the sixth of her reign.

We come now to a more cheerful portion of our narrative, the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

and influence, who were decidedly against the Romish religion. Amongst these, Cecil strengthened her purpose by the strongest arguments; and the Catholics saw that the barbarities of Mary's reign had only caused the Protestant martyrs to be revered, whilst themselves and their religion were in an equal degree disliked.

But there were some circumstances, which it is not needful to notice particularly, that made some think Elizabeth's title to the crown not so good as that of Mary, Queen of Scotland, who was the grandchild of Henry the Seventh's eldest daughter. Mary had been married to the Dauphin, or eldest son of the King of France; and she and her husband had there been crowned as King and Queen of England. Mary was a devoted Catholic; which was one reason, amongst others, that induced the English to reject her claim. Elizabeth, however, was in a state of continual uneasiness, and extremely jealous of Mary's superior beauty and accomplishments. In the mean time, the Reformation was proceeding rapidly in Scot-

land, where the chief barons undertook to uphold it. A civil war ensued ; and Mary, being defeated, was imprudent enough to seek shelter in England. Elizabeth detained her prisoner eighteen years, and then caused her, most unrighteously, to be beheaded. Elizabeth, like all the Tudors, was fond of the exercise of power ; but this was the most disgraceful exercise of it in her reign.

King Philip of Spain was not at all pleased at Elizabeth's rejection of his proposals ; and he determined to shew his anger by an invasion of the country, of which he had long desired to be king. He prepared the most formidable armament which had ever threatened our shores. This he called the *Invincible Armada* ; and the Pope pronounced his blessing upon it as such. It consisted of one hundred and thirty vessels, most of them of the largest size ; it had on board thirty thousand men, and almost three thousand pieces of artillery. The English fleet at this time numbered only twenty-eight small vessels, belonging to the state ; but such was the spirit and determination of the people,

that it was increased by one hundred ships belonging to private persons. Elizabeth was well aware how great her danger was, but exhibited no dismay. She made the best preparations for defence that her means allowed, and waited the event. The English commanders were Lord Howard of Effingham, Sir Francis Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher. These were able men, and our seamen were superior to those of Spain ; but still, had not Providence favoured England most remarkably, the enemy must have triumphed. Tempests contended with the *Invincible Armada*, until its chief power was dispersed and ruined. The English, seizing the advantage, chased and destroyed vessel after vessel, so that at last the Spanish admiral, baffled as he was by contrary winds and the alertness of his enemies, prudently turned his thoughts homeward. Afraid, however, to venture back by the way he came, he sailed north, and took his course by the Orkneys. A violent tempest overtook him there, and the greater part of his remaining fleet was wrecked. Such was the miserable

conclusion of an enterprise, which had been three years preparing, exhausted the force and revenues of Spain, and long filled Europe with anxiety or expectation.

Nobly courageous as Elizabeth was when her crown was thus threatened with open danger, she was constantly fearful and anxious on account of less apparent evils. James VI., King of Scotland, reigned in the place of his unfortunate mother ; and, whatever claim she might have to the crown of England, he of course inherited. Elizabeth annoyed both him and herself, to the end of her life, by incessant tricks, and manœuvres, and fretful watchings, lest he should any how obtain an advantage over her, of which he appears to have had no thoughts. She knew, however, that James must certainly succeed her ; and in this expectation she died somewhat wretchedly, in the seventieth year of her age, and the forty-fifth of her reign.

Thus closed the illustrious reign of Elizabeth. Arbitrary and cruel as she was occasionally, she was much less so than the sove-

reigns of her family generally had been. She exceeded all of them in the ability and economy of her government, and in that true regal wisdom, which makes the interests of the people the chief concern in all public measures.

Our notice of eminent characters must now cease, for they become much too numerous for our little book. The genius of England burst forth with uncommon splendour in this reign. We can only mention the names of Cecil, Lord Burleigh, Walsingham, Lord Howard, Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Bacon, Spenser, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Roger Ascham, Sir Philip Sidney, and Hooker.

In this reign the East-India company was first established ; Sir Francis Drake and Cavendish sailed round the globe ; and Sir Walter Raleigh settled a colony in Virginia.



JAMES I.

SURNAMED STUART.

Born, 1566. Began to reign, 1603.

Reigned 22 years, 3 days. Died, 1625, aged 59.

JAMES THE FIRST, who in learning and hunting delighted,
The Crowns of old England and Scotland united ;
And though in the air he seem'd doom'd to be blown,
He found out the plot, and remained on the throne.
In this reign a translation of Scripture was made ;
His foes the great Raleigh to ruin betray'd ;
The New River to Town was from Hertfordshire brought ;
And whales were, near Greenland, by Englishmen caught.

James, the First of England and Sixth of Scotland, whose family name was Stuart,

succeeded Elizabeth on the 24th of March, 1603; and he assumed the title of King of Great Britain. This king was a protestant; so the Pope and the Catholics were again disappointed. Queen Elizabeth had left him not only a kingdom, but a kingdom without incumbrances; no wars abroad, no sedition at home; and not only so, but a realm supplied with the best fruits of peace and plenty of necessary things, above all good counsellors, whom James also employed. He began by bestowing titles with an unsparing hand; so that honours of that sort became at last too cheap to be valued.

James had enjoyed his dignity but little more than two years, when the gunpowder plot was detected, the anniversary commemoration of which, my readers are aware, takes place on the 5th of November. The Roman Catholics had been too much vexed by the turn which public affairs had taken against them to remain quiet and contented. One of their number, a gentleman named Catesby, planned revenge, and opened his scheme to Percy, of the house of Northum-

berland. "To serve our purpose," said he, "we must destroy, at one blow, the king, the royal family, the lords, and the commons, and bury all our enemies in one general ruin. They will all assemble on the meeting of parliament; a few of us combining may form a mine of gunpowder under the hall where they meet: this, by a train, can be fired, whilst we stand out of danger."

Being joined by others, the conspirators prepared for their operations. They hired a vault, which was to be let, under the House of Lords, and, with the assistance of Fawkes, a Spanish officer, they stowed therein thirty-six barrels of gunpowder: and, placing a train and matches in readiness, covered the whole with faggots and other wood. Trusting to that concealment, they boldly threw the doors open, and awaited with the calmness of certainty the awful result. But the feelings of private friendship operated so far on one of their number as to induce him to send a hint, by way of caution, to Lord Monteagle, a Catholic, who would have attended the house. The note, delivered by an

unknown hand, excited much astonishment, but nothing like an apprehension of the real danger, until it was laid before the king, who immediately understood gunpowder to be the thing intended. Search was immediately made, and the whole was discovered. The conspirators fled, but were overtaken; and either died in the affray with their pursuers, or by the hands of the executioner. The king certainly shewed much sagacity and magnanimity throughout this affair. He took care that the guilty should suffer, but not others, merely because they were Catholics. His moderation in this respect greatly displeased many of his subjects. The Catholics, too, though so gently dealt by, remained his implacable enemies; whilst a religious party arose, which accused even the Protestant Church of England of popery, and demanded a *purser* form of doctrine and worship: these persons therefore obtained the name of *Puritans*. The king and these mutually disliked each other; but the House of Commons favoured the stricter sect; and, being somewhat unwilling to grant supplies to James,

a good deal of ill-will existed. Nevertheless, a high degree of reverence for royalty remained; and James, though he entertained extravagant notions of the power and authority of kings, did not often exercise either in a tyrannical way. He loved peace, both at home and abroad, and was determined to maintain it.

This king gave his daughter in marriage to the most powerful Protestant prince in Germany, called the Elector Palatine, who, however, afterwards lost his dominions; and even then James would not interfere with the sword. He was negotiating a marriage for his son, Charles, with Henrietta Maria, of France, when he died, in 1625, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, and the twenty-second of his reign. To that son he left, with his crown, many troubles, which his weakness and want of foresight had occasioned.



CHARLES I.

Born, 1600. Began to reign, 1625.

Reigned 22 years, 9 months, 19 days. Deposed 1648.

Beheaded, 1649, aged 48.

CHARLES THE FIRST, to prerogative strongly inclined,
Involved in a civil commotion we find.

He fought and he struggled, but all proved in vain,
He soon was made pris'ner, his forces were slain ;
The parliament triumph'd, the king was deposed,
And a scaffold the scene of his sufferings closed ;
Though Lyttleton says, who his hist'ry has penn'd,
He excell'd as a husband, a father, and friend.

Charles I. was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne ; and was a prince of grave and manly deportment, not without

knowledge and ability. But neither he nor his father could discern what, in the language of the Puritans, was called "the signs of the times." They both governed as if no alteration in men's tempers and opinions had taken place since the Conquest. Charles had great occasion for money, at the commencement of his reign, to carry on certain wars on the continent, which his father had only deferred without removing the occasion. The parliament, which had scarcely remained quiet in the former reign, was now decidedly resolved to interfere with the acts of the sovereign. Instead, therefore, of granting supplies, the commons began to murmur about grievances, which so displeased the king that he dissolved the assembly; but he was soon obliged to call another, which was more untoward than the former. The king dissolved this parliament also, and resolved to raise money without one. This was the grand occasion of that dreadful contention, in which the sword was drawn, and civil war desolated the country.

The people, unused to be taxed in Charles's



CROMWELL.

THE COMMONWEALTH.

This form of government is sometimes called a *republic*;—such is that now established in the United States of America. The people in this case are supposed to govern themselves by choosing their own rulers. Cromwell, however, was as absolute and despotic as William the First or any other conqueror.

But though Charles I. was dead, his son was not; nor were the royalists, or those who wished to overturn Cromwell's authority, entirely suppressed. The Scots and Irish were also amongst his enemies; and much remained for him to do before he could establish himself firmly in his usurped power. He, therefore, by all means, took care to preserve the good-will and support of the army; and, having this, he set all opposition at defiance.

He first went to Ireland and quelled the insurrections there, not, however, without practising the most horrible cruelties. He next turned his arms against the Scots, who had risen in behalf of Charles II., and defeated them at Dumbar. That day twelve-months he defeated Charles at Worcester; after which the prince's party was so broken that he wandered about in disguise, and only escaped by the most surprising incidents. From this time Cromwell seems to have kept his eye on the sovereign power. He dismissed the parliament, by turning the members out of the house, and locking the

doors. He afterwards practised various methods to get himself appointed to the kingly office, but never found it safe to venture farther than to assume the title of Protector of the realm. During this time he certainly governed with great ability ; and the British navy gained much reputation and power. It appears that Cromwell never was without apprehensions for his own life ; so that he wore armour constantly under his clothes ; and he died unhappily, 3d September 1658, leaving his son, Richard, Protector in his stead. Richard was of a very different temper from his father ; and, finding his post too difficult and dangerous, abandoned it, and retired to private life.

During the Commonwealth, the service of the Church of England was discontinued, or practised secretly ; the Presbyterians and independents being both averse from that form of religion. Cromwell had joined the Independants.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESTORATION.

The people of England, weary of war and commotion, and dissatisfied with the government of usurpers, had long wished the ancient monarchy to be restored; bitterly feeling that those who had overthrown it were tyrants as great as any kings that had swayed the sceptre. I know not how long the restoration might have been deferred, if General Monk had not taken the opportunity of Cromwell's death to move in favour of King Charles II. His management was prompt and cautious. Whilst marching with an army to London, none could learn of him what were his intentions, whether he would support the parliament or Charles. There was great wisdom in this; for he was

enabled thereby to learn the real disposition of men's minds. It was not till he entered London that he communicated his own determination, which was received with great satisfaction by the people. A free parliament was chosen, the House of Lords, which had been abolished in Cromwell's times, was restored, and a message was received from Charles, stating his willingness to be ruled by the advice of the two houses, when he should recover his crown.

A committee of Lords and Commons was soon after despatched to invite Charles to return and take possession of the government. The king, leaving the continent, whither his misfortunes had driven him, embarked for England, and entered London on the 29th of May, which was also his birth-day, in the year 1660.



CHARLES II.

Born, 1630. Began to reign, 1660.

Reigned 24 years, 8 months, 8 days. Died, 1685, aged 55.

Whilst Cromwell was styled Lord Protector at home,
CHARLES THE SECOND was doom'd as an exile to roam ;
But when Oliver died, by consent of the nation,
Gen'ral Monk soon effected the king's restoration.
In this reign, the great fire of London occur'd,
And Blood stole the Crown from the Tower, I've heard ;
The Thames was so frozen, that coaches plied there,
And booths were erected resembling a fair.

King Charles II. behaved at first with great
moderation, and was chiefly directed by the

advice of the Earl of Clarendon, whose daughter the king's brother, James, Duke of York, had married whilst in exile. But indolence and love of indulgence afterwards led this monarch to entrust his affairs to less worthy persons, who obtained the name of the *Cabal*, because the initials of their names formed that word. Little attention was paid to the claims of the royalists, who had lost their all in the king's cause. But, in little gratitude was shewn to friends, it is true also that less revenge was inflicted on enemies than could have been expected. An act of pardon was passed, from which only a few were excepted.

In settling religious matters, it was found that the Church of England had powerful supporters; and it was re-established. Unhappily, men were not content without persecuting those who differed from them in opinion. Two thousand clergymen were excluded from their livings by the straitness with which it was attempted to bind their consciences; and the Dissenters, in general, were subjected to many and grievous hardships. Charles ma

ried the Infanta, or Princess, of Portugal, chiefly on account of her great fortune. But in the end this event proved unfortunate.

The Dutch having become very insolent and troublesome, a war was undertaken against them, and some glorious victories were gained at sea. Although the parliament was more liberal in granting supplies to this king than it had been in former times, Charles's prodigality and dissipation involved him in great difficulties, which made him submit to receive a pension from the court of France, by which the king was brought under the mischievous influence of that country, and the English people were deeply displeased. Many pretended plots, caused by the violent animosities of various parties, disturbed this reign; and some persons suffered on account of them. At the same time, the House of Commons began to shew signs of its former spirit: and the king at length dissolved that assembly, fully resolved never to call another parliament.

From this time, Charles ruled in the most arbitrary manner; fining and imprisoning

the people at his pleasure. The Rye-house plot was contrived in consequence, but was detected ; and the celebrated Lord William Russell and Algernon Sidney were condemned and executed, though on very imperfect evidence.

Towards the close of his reign, it is thought, this king meditated a change in his ministers and his conduct, by which he might satisfy the nation, whose murmurs were now incessant : but death interposed, and, as in many other cases, made good resolutions of no avail. He died of apoplexy, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his reign, regretted by those who had condemned his government ; for he was professedly a Protestant, and upheld the religious institutions of the country ; but his brother, the Duke of York, who succeeded him, was known to be a Papist, and was likely to run any hazards for his religion, to which he was completely bigoted.

In the year 1665, that dreadful visitation, called the plague, broke out in London, and in twelve months carried off nearly one

hundred thousand persons. In the succeeding year happened the great fire in the metropolis, which continued for three days, and consumed three hundred streets, and above thirteen thousand houses and public buildings. This last calamity was ridiculously attributed to the papists; and the Monument, erected near the spot where it commenced, recorded, till very lately, that absurd popular opinion.



JAMES II.

Born, 1633. Began to reign, 1685.

Reigned 3 years, 10 months, 17 days. Abdicated, 1688.

Died, 1701, aged 68.

JAMES THE SECOND had scarcely ascended the throne,
When his folly and bigotry were both made known.
The Protestant faith he resolved to o'erthrow,
And did, by degrees, all a tyrant could do.
The brave Duke of Monmouth attempted in vain
The nation to rouse, and their rights to regain;
But William of Orange more fortunate proved,
And the bigoted prince from his kingdom removed.

James II., son of **Charles I.** and brother
to the last king, ascended the throne, but had
not prudence long to retain his eminence.

He promised, in parliament, to maintain the Protestant established religion; but took every method to bring in popery. The Duke of Monmouth, a natural son of Charles II., landed in the West of England, and was proclaimed king by his followers; but, being defeated and taken prisoner, he was beheaded. In the trial of him and his partizans, the infamous Judge Jefferys exercised his cruelties.

Amongst the means used to introduce the Catholic religion, which then suffered under rigorous laws and penalties, the king issued an ordinance for a general liberty of conscience; which act seven bishops opposed. They were brought to trial for their disobedience, but were acquitted by the jury, to the great joy of the nation.

At length, the disaffection of all classes became so alarming to James, who, no doubt, had his father's fate in his memory, that, not knowing what else to do, he determined on abandoning his crown, and seeking an asylum in France. But we must mention the grand cause of alarm to him, and the

event which brought about the important change called

THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

William, Prince of Orange, had married the king's eldest daughter, Mary. He had, therefore, peculiar expectations, and a peculiar interest in English affairs; and, being a known and stanch Protestant, he was looked upon with much favour by his father-in-law's subjects. I do not know whether he would have interfered, as he did, if he had not been solicited to do so by the most powerful parties in England. After some deliberation, he embarked with thirteen thousand men, and landed, on the 5th of November, at Torbay. At first, however, men remembering Judge Jefferys' terrors, were afraid to join him; but, after a few days, parties and persons of distinction flocked to his standard; amongst these were the Princess Ann, the king's favourite daughter, and her husband, Prince George of Denmark.

The king, thus deserted, sent his queen and young son to France, whither he himself soon afterwards followed. James having thus abdicated the throne, the Prince and Princess of Orange were declared by parliament to be joint sovereigns.



WILLIAM III.

OF ORANGE.

Born, 1650. Began to reign, 1689.

Reigned 13 years, 23 days. Died, 1702, aged 52.

GREAT WILLIAM, judicious, sagacious, and brave,
Came forward Great Britain to succour and save ;
And Britons, by feelings of gratitude led,
Placed the crown on their gallant deliverer's head :
With MARY, his consort, he happily reign'd,
And in battle fresh laurels he constantly gain'd.
The famed Bank of England now first claim'd attention,
And historians now the first bayonets mention.

William and Mary were likewise acknowledged with alacrity in Scotland, where

Episcopacy, or the government of bishops in the church, was abolished, and the Presbyterian form, of which the Scots were very fond, was established.

But the people of Ireland, consisting chiefly of Roman Catholics, were attached to James, and still held out for him. James, having received some troops and money from France, landed at Kinsale, in May 1689, and was received with great joy in Dublin. But the cruelties exercised on the Protestants injured his cause; and he was defeated by King William, at the battle of the Boyne; after which he set off a second time for France. His adherents in Ireland were vanquished in other battles, and the authority of the new sovereigns was fully established; not, however, until the French fleet had been defeated off La Hogue, within sight of James, who was preparing to invade England with another army.

This unfortunate prince, James II., died at St. Germain's, in France, in 1701, aged sixty-eight.

The reign of William was chiefly distin-

guished at home by his religious principles, which were the reverse of those of James. He, however, had many disputes with his parliaments, occasioned chiefly by his ambitious efforts to humble the power of France. He enjoyed altogether more authority in Holland than in England. He died through a fall from his horse, in 1702, aged fifty-two, having reigned here fourteen years. His consort, Mary, had died before him ; so that the crown devolved to her sister, Anne, younger daughter of James II.



ANNE.

Born, 1664. Began to reign, 1702.

Reigned 12 years, 4 months, 24 days. Died, 1714, aged 50.

GREAT ANNE, who commanders of merit employ'd,
A series of glorious successes enjoy'd ;
And, spite of all foes, and all factions beside,
Truly honour'd she lived, and lamented she died.
In this reign, the fine mansion of Blenheim was raised
For Marlborough's Duke, so deservedly praised ;
And now flourish'd Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, and Rowe :
With Bolingbroke, Congreve, and more than you know.

Queen Anne, or, as she is called, " Good Queen Anne," attained the crown of England in the thirty-eighth year of her age ; and was

looked upon with hope and good-will by the nation generally.

She carried on the war with France, with the most splendid success, by means of the famous Duke of Marlborough, who defeated the enemy in various engagements, took many of their strongest towns, and brought Louis the Fourteenth to the brink of ruin. In conjunction with Prince Eugene, general to the Emperor of Germany, he gained a complete victory over the French and Bavarians, at Blenheim, on the Danube, in 1704. The same year, Gibraltar was taken by the English fleet, under Sir George Rooke. Shortly after, Marlborough defeated the French again at Ramillies, again at Oudenarde, and at Malplaquet; so that the King of France began to be afraid for his capital.

The queen had, in the mean time, been much influenced at home by the Duchess of Marlborough; but, at length, she was displeased with her and the Duke too. He was recalled, and the command of the army given to the Duke of Ormond, who concluded an agreement, called the peace of Utrecht,

in 1713. This queen does not appear to have possessed much strength of mind or of purpose herself, but was guided greatly by those about her. She was much attached to the Church of England, but was not quite tolerant enough to Dissenters, against whom an act was passed, which was only defeated by her death, which took place in 1714, in the fiftieth year of her age, and thirteenth of her reign.

The crown of England had been settled, by act of parliament, on Protestant princes only; so that, at Anne's death, it devolved on George, Duke of Brunswick, and Elector of Hanover, whose mother, Sophia, was descended from James I.



GEORGE I. OF HANOVER,

SURNAMED GUELPH.

Born, 1680. Began to reign, 1714.

Reigned 12 years, 10 months, 10 days. Died, 1727, aged 87.

GEORGE THE FIRST, as Elector of Hanover known,
Succeeded illustrious Anne on the throne ;
And acted so prudently in his new station,
As to gain the respect and esteem of the nation.
Now parliament-men were for seven years elected ;
The South-Sea delusion was form'd and detected ;
To prevent the small-pox a new method was tried ;
And the King, on a journey, at Osnaburgh died.

George I. was fifty-five years old when he became King of Great Britain. He found, on his arrival in England, several parties in re-

ligion and politics, which divided the nation. We cannot attend much to these, but may just say that the two most conspicuous were those called *Whigs* and *Tories*, or *Whigs* and *Jacobites*. The terms *Whig* and *Tory* have no particular meaning, except as applied in politics : being merely nicknames derived from Scottish and Irish low words. The *Jacobites* were so called from their adherence to the family of *Jacobus*, the Latin name of James II. He had left a son, a Catholic, who, but for his religion, might have enjoyed the crown instead of William and Anne.

This personage, commonly called *the Pretender*, thought proper to make an effort to regain the crown. His Catholic friends in Scotland commenced operations first, under the Earl of Mar, who assembled twelve thousand men ; these were opposed by the Duke of Argyle, for King George ; and it was not till his party had been worsted, and placed in desperate circumstances, that the Pretender (for so we must call him for distinction's sake) arrived amongst them. He

soon after decamped, leaving his too busy partizans to suffer the doom of traitors for their exertions in his behalf.

The rest of this reign was occupied chiefly with the differences of party politicians, which will neither instruct nor amuse us. The king died suddenly at Osnaburgh, in 1727, in the thirteenth year of his reign as a British sovereign, and sixty-eighth of his age.



GEORGE II.

Born, 1683. Began to reign, 1727.

Reigned 33 years, 4 months, 14 days. Died, 1760, aged 77.

GEORGE THE SECOND, though plain in his mode of address,
Sway'd the sceptre of Britain with brilliant success ;
His virtues more useful than splendid appear'd,
His justice was spotless, and his name was revered ;
Rebellion was crush'd, and good order maintain'd,
Whilst by sea and by land many vict'ries were gain'd.
The British Museum now open'd to view,
And the Old Style was changed, in this reign, for the New.

George II., son of the former monarch, ascended the throne, in 1727, at the age of thirty - three. There were many reasons

which induced the people of England to desire a change of measures with a new reign. Taxation, though nothing like what it has been since, was then thought to be grievously oppressive; and the interests of Great Britain were too much sacrificed to foreign connections. However, the system of politics underwent no alteration. Sir Robert Walpole was the chief manager of affairs.

George II. was the last of our monarchs who personally led an army to battle. This was in 1743, at Dettingen, in Germany, where the war with the French had caused an army of forty thousand men under King George to be assembled. Through the chances of war, these troops were so shut in as to be in danger of actually starving; but the enemy had not the judgment to see and take advantage of his opportunity. A battle ensued; and the French were obliged to give way, with the loss of five thousand men. The King evinced all the signs of true and royal courage; and gained much reputation by that day's action.

In the year 1745, the sword of war was last

drawn in this island. Charles Edward, son of the Pretender, and grandson of James II., made an important effort for the crown and dominions of his ancestors. His partizans, the Jacobites, in England and Scotland, had promised, if he would land in Britain, that they would take up arms and join his standard. The time seemed favourable for his project. Scotland was unprotected by troops; King George was in Germany; the Duke of Cumberland, at the head of the British army, was in Flanders; and a great part of the Highlanders of Scotland were ready for insurrection, on account of some dislike they had to the existing government.

In July of that year, Charles Edward, called the young Pretender, landed in Scotland, with very few attendants, having experienced a destructive sea-engagement on his passage. The disaffected of that country gathered round him; and, for some time, he was wonderfully successful. The English government, now alarmed, offered 30,000 *l.* for the Pretender's head. The Pretender made a similar offer for the head of King

George. However, he was entirely mistaken in thinking that the people of England generally were inclined to displace a Protestant and put a Catholic on the throne. The nation voluntarily armed against him, and supported the government. But Charles Edward continued to use his arms with advantage, and repulsed the king's forces several times; particularly at Prestonpans, where Sir John Cope was completely defeated, with the loss of his military stores. This victory put the Pretender in possession of the very things he wanted; money, arms, and encouragement. Having gained Edinburgh, he took up his residence in Holyrood House, the palace of the ancient Scottish kings, and began to feel himself something like a sovereign.

At length, having collected an army of about five thousand men, he resolved to march into England; where he took Carlisle, and found many valuable stores. Thence he made his way to Derby, where he quartered his army. Being now little more than a hundred miles from London, the greatest

Alarm and confusion prevailed there; and, had young Charles gone on as boldly as he commenced, and marched thither immediately, he might, perhaps, have succeeded in overturning the existing government. But, finding himself greatly disappointed in his hopes of assistance from various quarters, he determined, with the advice of his officers, to retreat into Scotland, where his friends had assembled a large army in his favour. The Duke of Cumberland, returned from the continent, now marched after him, but did not overtake him; and the Pretender gained another victory over the king's troops at Falkirk. This made it necessary that new and vigorous measures should be taken against him. The Duke of Cumberland marched northwards again, and, at the little village of Culloden, totally defeated the Pretender's forces, and obliged him to make his escape, which he did with difficulty. His adherents were severely punished for their rash attempt. Many of the leaders were beheaded; and his party was so broken and disheartened that no further efforts were made

to place him on the throne by force of arms.

This reign is famous for many military and naval exploits ; but the rebellion we have noticed was the chief domestic occurrence. George II. died suddenly at Kensington, in the year 1760, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and thirty-fourth of his reign.

His son, Frederick, Prince of Wales, having died before him, he was succeeded by his grandson, George III.



GEORGE III.

Born, 1738. Began to reign, 1760.

Reigned 59 years, 3 months, 4 days. Died 1820, aged 82.

GEORGE THE THIRD, of his people the father and friend,
Acted well through his reign from beginning to end.
When the French Revolution astonish'd the world,
And kings from their thrones in succession were hurl'd;
Unappall'd by the storm, ev'ry danger he braved,
And by firmness his kingdom from anarchy saved.
His reign was extended (let Heav'n have the praise)
To fifty-nine years, and three months, and four days!

This reign, the longest in English history,
s so crowded with events, occasioned by
he surprising contentions of nations with
which Britain was engaged, and is so full of

other political occurrences, that, consistently with our plan, we can only notice a few particulars.

The American war forms a prominent event in the history of George III. That country, which we now call the United States of America, was colonized from England by settlers, many of whom fled from religious persecution in the reigns of the Tudors and Stuarts; others were banished thither for their crimes. They had increased so much in numbers and opulence as to become an important part of the British dominions. They continued long to acknowledge their dependence on England, their mother-country; and perhaps, they might still have done so, had it not been for the overbearing obstinacy of the British ministry, who first determined to tax the Americans without their consent, and then attempted by force of arms to compel submission. On these accounts, the Americans took up arms, and, though vanquished in repeated engagements, still they were unsubdued in spirit; at length, under their famous general, Wash-

ington, they established their entire independence, and now exist as a powerful and rising empire, whose limits and future destiny none can calculate.

During that conflict, which lasted about seven years, the French constantly assisted the Americans, and, in the end, they carried home to their own country notions of liberty and independence, which they had imbibed in the Western world. France, whose king was Louis XVI., had a government which oppressed the people in the most grievous manner, though the monarch was not himself a tyrant. At length, the French rose in rebellion, and treated their king as the English had served Charles I. : they beheaded him ; and a most sanguinary revolution ensued. A republican government was established, during the existence of which various parties were struggling for power at home, and each, as it became master, committed the most inhuman cruelties on its opponents ; whilst abroad their emissaries strove to spread their own animosity against monarchical institutions in other countries. In

this manner Great Britain was, for her own safety, forced into a war of eight years' duration with the French republic, till Napoleon Buonaparte, the most successful of its generals, seized the supreme authority, first assuming the title of Consul, and afterwards that of Emperor. With him Great Britain concluded a peace, which was called the peace of Amiens, because the treaty was signed in that city. It lasted but a few months, when the violence and ambition of the ruler of France again involved us in war with him. Never did our country display so proud an attitude as during this conflict. Though Napoleon had either conquered, or reduced to a kind of vassalage, almost all the sovereigns of Europe, and had arrayed all its forces against us, Great Britain not only resisted them with success, but, by the astonishing achievements of her navy and army, the one under Nelson, the other under the Duke of Wellington, she ensured her own safety, assisted in releasing the continent from the thralldom in which it was held by her bitterest enemy, and acquired

higher military renown and political pre-eminence than she had ever before enjoyed. The battle of Waterloo, in 1815, terminated this grand struggle by the downfall of Buonaparte, who was banished to the Island of St. Helena, where he died in 1821. This long national conflict was not carried on; neither was all this glory acquired by Great Britain, without enormous expense; indeed, the payment of the interest of the debt then contracted is felt as a heavy burden even to this day. Many have questioned the policy of engaging in these wars at all; while others contend, and with great appearance of justice, that the English Government could not have abstained from them without sacrificing the national honour and independence, and exposing this country to the dangers arising from those principles of anarchy and infidelity which produced such horrible effects in France.

In India, too, Britain exerted her power, and obtained victory and dominion over a vast extent of country, and about a hundred millions of people.

I must just mention the alarm and confusion which took place in London in the year 1780, distinguished as the memorable year of the riots. These were occasioned by the prejudice of the people against the Roman Catholics. It had been proposed to grant them the relief which they have lately obtained, when the populace, to the number of twenty thousand, headed by Lord George Gordon, a popular declaimer, proceeded to the parliament house, with a petition against the measure. The mob next fell to acts of violence upon the dwellings and chapels of the Catholics, and then began to attack other buildings. Houses were demolished, or reduced to ashes; the prison of Newgate was set on fire; the distilleries were forced open, and many perished, with the liquor thence obtained: an attempt was made upon the Bank; and the aspect of affairs was so serious, that the king was obliged to act with sudden vigour. The military were marched into London, and succeeded, not without the loss of many lives, in restoring tranquillity and order.

This King was long afflicted with the

mournful disease of insanity : the latter years of his life, especially, were passed entirely under that mental cloud ; and his son, the Prince of Wales, exercised the sovereignty for nine years as Regent. George III. died 29th January, 1820, in the eighty-second year of his age, and sixtieth of his reign. It is just to say of him, that he studied the interests of his people in his domestic government ; but the wars, in which his policy engaged him, have proved very burthensome to the country.



GEORGE IV.

*Born, 1762. Began to reign, 1820.
Reigned 10 years, 5 months, 9 days. Died, 1830, aged 68.*

GEORGE THE FOURTH, when his patriot father was gone,
By right of succession ascended the throne :
To Hanover, Ireland, and Scotland, he went,
Where his time and his money he cheerfully spent :
Famed Windsor's old castle this monarch repair'd,
And near Buckingham-gate a new palace he rear'd ;
But ne'er did its founder within it reside ;
For, ere it was finish'd, he sicken'd and died.

George IV., on coming to the crown, found little addition to the authority which he had before exercised, except in name. His

daughter, the Princess Charlotte, married to Prince Leopold, now King of the Belgians, had died three years before, to the great grief and disappointment of the nation. Soon after his coronation, he visited Dublin, Hanover, and Edinburgh; at which places he received the most agreeable tokens of attachment. His reign was a period of peace, and has few incidents for our history. It was chiefly distinguished by national improvements and expeditions of discovery. Captain Parry was sent to the Arctic regions, and Captain Franklin to the northern bounds of America. Their voyages were highly interesting to science.

This King resided mostly at Windsor, or his Pavilion at Brighton; at both these places, as well as in London, he expended vast sums of money on his sumptuous palaces; but as he lived much retired from the notice of his people, he did not live in their affections. A great national object was accomplished in the last year of his reign, the concession of the Catholic claims, and the abolition of the Test Act, by which dissenters, popish as

well as protestant, were relieved from the grievances under which they had long supposed themselves to labour.

The King, whose health had been for some time suffering from disease, was seized with alarming symptoms in the spring of the year 1830. His physicians, with uncommon skill, contended against its effects for some months; but at length, after a period of extreme suffering, George IV. expired, 26th of June 1830, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and the eleventh of his reign.

As he left no children, and his next brother, the Duke of York, had died in 1827, the crown devolved upon his second brother, William IV.



WILLIAM IV.

*Born, 1765. Began to reign, 1830. Reigned 7 years within
8 days. Died 1837, aged 72.*

Then WILLIAM THE FOURTH took his seat on the throne
With his excellent Queen, for he ruled not alone.
When round him arose the political storm,
He braved the rude billows, and granted REFORM ;
A change which the people received with applause
And loyal devotion to him as its cause.
By this boon, too, the monarch encircled his crown
With an unfading halo of future renown.

William IV. ascended the throne amid
strong demonstrations of popular favour,
and gave early proofs of his future good go-

vernment, by an immediate attention to the desire of the nation.

A reform in the representation of the people in parliament had long been wished for. It so happened that, in the course of several centuries, many of the boroughs which possessed the privilege of sending members to parliament, had dwindled into such insignificance as to contain but a few houses ; while others, formerly unimportant, had sprung up into such consequence as to have a population of more than a hundred thousand persons, who had no representative. The lands and houses in many of the small places having, moreover, become the private property of noblemen or gentlemen, the members for such boroughs were in reality nominated by such proprietors, instead of being freely elected by the inhabitants. 'The Reform Bill proposed to take away the right of sending members to parliament from many of the small boroughs, and to confer it on such of the great commercial towns as did not yet possess it. After great opposition from those whose interest was likely to be affected by it,

this bill passed both houses of parliament and received the royal assent on the 7th of June, 1832. Many other political measures of great importance, the principal of which was a bill for reforming the corporations of England, were shortly afterwards introduced and carried into effect.

The king died on the morning of the 20th of June, 1837, deeply regretted by all classes of his subjects, after a reign of nearly seven years, during which the nation enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity at home and abroad.



VICTORIA.

Born, 1819. Began to reign, 1837. Vivat Regina!

Now the sceptre of Britain VICTORIA sways,
And thousands, exulting, are loud in her praise ;
All party distinctions for ðnce disappear,
Tory, Radical, Whig, are unanimous here.
Throughout the whole realm festive crowds may be seen
Who rejoice in the name of their lovely young queen :
May all their fond wishes, each earnest appeal,
Be granted by Heaven to further her weal !

Victoria, the only daughter of the late duke of Kent, fourth son of George III., succeeded her uncle, and her accession to the

crowns were hailed with more than ordinary enthusiasm. In November, the queen went to a magnificent banquet at Guildhall, and the procession was one of the most splendid ever seen in England.

About the end of the year, considerable disturbances took place in the British North American possessions; but the rebels were soon defeated and driven from the country, so that tranquillity was restored, at least for a time.

On the 14th of January in the next year, the Royal Exchange of London, one of the most beautiful buildings in the metropolis, was totally destroyed by fire.

On the 20th of June, the coronation of her Majesty took place in Westminster Abbey. In the procession thither, the queen was accompanied by all the most distinguished of her own subjects, and by many foreign princes and noblemen from other European states; among these the veteran warrior marshal Soult attracted the greatest attention. The public rejoicings on this day were more general in London, and throughout the

kingdom, than had ever been the case for many years.

This year the great railroad from London to Birmingham was opened for public accommodation, and such is the facility of travelling afforded thereby, that persons have gone from London to Birmingham, and thence by other railways through Manchester to Liverpool, a distance of above 200 miles, in ten hours.

Several attempts have been made by ministers to effect reforms in various departments of the state, but they have hitherto failed, owing to the powerful opposition encountered in parliament. We may hope, however, that those who oppose measures so necessary to the public good will see their error before it is too late.

THE END.



APR 2 1961

